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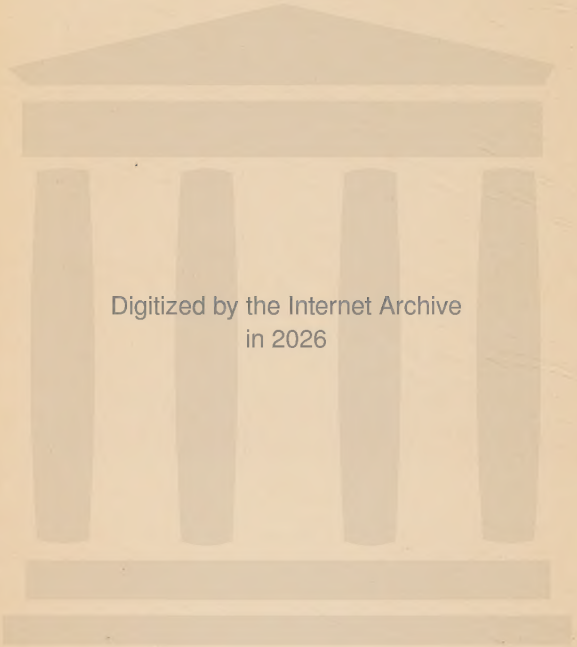

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FOLLOW THE CHRIST

Suggestions for Leaders of Bible Classes for Young People over 14 years of age

PART I

FORTY LESSONS ON THE APOSTLES' CREED

PART II

SIX TALKS ON THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

With notes on prayers for use with Parts I and II, on sex education, and on the discussion method of teaching

BY

E. VERA PEMBERTON

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.
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" Follow the Christ, the King ;
Live pure, speak true, right wrong,
Follow the King, else wherefore born ? "

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FOREWORD

PART I

These lessons were worked out for use with a Boys' Bible Class, the average age of the members being about sixteen years. The method followed was very informal. The class was not large, and the members sat in a semicircle facing the Leader, who had a large blackboard and easel beside her chair.

A blackboard of some kind is the only essential apparatus for use with the lessons, apart from Bibles and Prayer Books. Nothing in the nature of an address was given, but the lessons were friendly talks in which there was absolutely free interchange of opinion between the Leader and members.

Very vital questions were touched on, and startling remarks were often made by the members. These provided much food for thought, and gave the Leader a much deeper insight into their spiritual difficulties.

She found that it was often necessary to fight down feelings of reluctance and, for the sake of the class, to tell them something of those intimate spiritual experiences which are so hard to speak of.

Often she thought of S. Peter's words, " Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason for the hope that is in you " (1 Pet. iii. 15).

It will be long before the memory fades of the tense pause which followed the ringing challenge of a non-communicant member when the subject of the lesson was the Blessed Sacrament. Leaning across with deadly earnestness, he said in a voice the Leader hardly recognized :

" If it means so much to you, Miss, tell us something of what it has done for you. I can't see nothing in it."

In the arrangement of these lesson notes it has been thought best to supply a certain amount of material with comparatively few teaching hints so that the Leader may be free to follow whatever method suits his or her particular class.

The amount of research work which can be done by the class, and the best methods of securing their co-operation, are matters which no one but the Class Leader can decide. To be of value, discussion must be spontaneous, and it will often be found that discussion arises over the points one felt were least likely to stimulate it.[1]

As regards questioning, great tact is needed when dealing with young people of the age of which we are thinking. Usually the most helpful questions are those which invite expressions of opinion from the class, and so start discussion. Questions asking for a statement of facts, or any which might be considered personal, are best avoided.

Similarly with written work, it will be generally wiser to let anything calling for self-expression be done voluntarily at home, and not necessarily be shown to the Leader. Suggestions for such " Home Study " are given at the end of each lesson.

The class for whom these lessons were written liked to have a short written summary of each. These summaries, which are appended to the lessons, were often built up as the various points were discussed. They were copied by the members into their notebooks at the conclusion of each lesson, after having been written by the Leader on the blackboard.

PART II

These talks were used with a mixed class of young communicants, which included the confirmed members of the Bible Class referred to in the notes on Part I.

The class met once a month in preparation for their corporate Communion.

The talks were given by the Leader, and any discussion arising out of them was kept till the end.

Great care was taken with the arrangement of the room for these meetings, in order to try and secure the right atmosphere.

A framed copy of " The Place of Meeting " was hung upon a dark background, and was lighted up by tiny candles which stood on a little table beneath, together with a vase of flowers.

Hanging near was a copy of the words of S. Thomas à Kempis : " For every one that loveth will prepare the best and fairest place for his Beloved, for herein is known the affection of him that entertaineth his Beloved."

[1] For a fuller treatment of the subject of discussion see Appendix (*d*).

Those using these talks are asked to remember that they were an attempt to help those just entering on the communicant life to realize its glorious possibilities. It was felt that it was better to leave instruction in details, and in the different aspects of the Blessed Sacrament, until later, and to concentrate on the great fact of the Presence.

E. Vera Pemberton

NOTE ON THE SYLLABUS

The Leader is very strongly urged not to keep too rigidly to the Syllabus. Where much discussion arises, it may be found that one lesson will provide material for two or three weeks' work. It may be advisable to break off the course from time to time in order to introduce more seasonal lessons, or in order to deal with some contemporary event. At some time during the Session a short course on the work of the Church Abroad ought certainly to find a place.

Abundant material for such a course can be obtained from the "Yarn" series for boys, and the "Heroine" series for girls. These can be obtained from all Missionary Societies at one shilling each.

FOLLOW THE CHRIST

I.—THE EVOLUTION OF THE IDEA OF GOD

"I Believe in God" (I)

REFERENCES

"The Idea of God" (Jevons). "Animism," "Polytheism," "Magic and Witchcraft." [Non-Christian Religions.]

AIM

To trace the evolution of the Idea of God and prepare the class to value more deeply the Christian Revelation of God.

INTRODUCTION

[Write on B.B. "I believe in God."]

These words are very familiar to all of us and we have repeated them over and over again when we have said the Apostles' Creed.

When we were children we probably joined in saying these words because we were told to, or because other people did. [Discuss.]

As we grow older we begin to think more about the meaning, and to wonder how it is that we can say we believe in a God Whom we have never seen.

This is such an interesting problem that learned men have spent their lives in studying all the different religions there are in the world to-day, and which there have been in the past, in order to see how belief in God first began.

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—*The Desire of the Human Soul for God.*

One thing seems clear as a result of this study, and that is that no

race of people has ever been heard of who have no religion. Within every Human Being whom He has created God has put a tiny spark of His own Life.

Because that tiny spark is always trying to get into touch with Him from Whom it came, men are instinctively drawn to God.

Stage 2.—The Searching of the Human Soul for God.

Apart from this instinct other things led men to believe in the existence of a Higher Power:

From the earliest times they were constantly brought face to face with mysteries, things which they could not understand.

[Let class suggest: The power of the wind, of thunder, of lightning, life and death; all these were things which Primitive Man could neither control, nor explain.]

The next step was to try and find out what and where that Higher Power was, and so, often unconsciously, men began to seek for God.

In many different directions men pursued that search, and because to all true seekers there was revealed a little bit of the truth, the world was gradually prepared for the full revelation.

Stage 3.—Fetishism.

The earliest known religion, and one still found among backward races to-day, is a belief in charms.

This is known as Fetishism. [Write on B.B. Discuss.]

Just as a little child talks to inanimate things as though they are alive, so these child races think that material objects are the abode of spirits good and bad. [Illustrate.]

To obtain possession of some object in which dwells a kindly spirit is consequently thought to ensure "good luck" for the owner. Where the people have got no further than this belief in charms, instead of the community worshipping a particular god or gods, each individual has his or her charms.

Stage 4.—Animism.

A little more advanced are the people who, as a community, worship the spirits whom they think dwell in all the wonderful things of nature, the sun, the moon, the stars, plants, animals and things which we say have no life.

In some cases the spirits of the dead are worshipped.

This spirit worship is called Animism. [Write on B.B. Discuss.]

No names are given to the spirits, who are thought of as vague, shadowy, but very powerful beings.

Stage 5.—Polytheism.

A little later some races began to think of the gods whom they worshipped as persons like themselves only more powerful.

They gave them proper names and long stories grew up about them and were handed down from generation to generation. [Discuss Myths and Mythology.]

The belief in personal gods as distinct from nameless spirits is known as Polytheism. [Write on B.B. and discuss.]

Stage 6.—Pantheism.

A very early form of belief in one God is Pantheism. [Write on B.B. Discuss.] This is the belief that there is nothing which is not a part of God, but that the Universe and all created things make up one huge Force which is God. [Discuss inscription on Egyptian Temple, "I am all that has been, is, or shall be." Help the class to see that the Pantheists' God is not perfect Holiness, perfect Beauty, and perfect Love, for the bad, the ugly, and the cruel things of life are thought to be part of His Nature.]

Stage 7.—"Seek and ye shall find."

In our Bibles we have the promise "Seek and ye shall find" (S. Matt. vii. 7). Let us see how these early Seekers found little bits of the truth as they groped towards the whole truth. [Draw from the class that :—

(1) Those who believed in charms were groping towards the truth that God is always at hand to help us.

(2) Those who believed in many spirits were groping towards the truth that all around us is a wonderful spirit world.

(3) Those who believed that their gods were persons like themselves were groping towards the truth that we are made in the Image of God.

(4) Those who believed that everything was a part of God were groping towards the truth that the Spirit of God dwells in us.

Discuss the danger of thinking contemptuously of, or ridiculing, heathen worship. Quote Longfellow's lines :

". . . in even savage bosoms
There are longings, yearnings, strivings
For the good they comprehend not."]

HOME STUDY

Suggest that during the week the class think out or write answers to the question: "Are prayers offered to idols wasted?"

SUMMARY

The Evolution of the Idea of God.

Primitive Man was attracted to God because of the Divine Spark within him.

From the earliest times men have found in the world things which they could not understand. This forced them to believe in the existence of a Power greater than themselves.

This was the starting point of Man's search for God, and God has revealed Himself gradually as people were able to understand what He could teach them.

II.—THE JEWISH CONCEPTION OF GOD

"I Believe in God" (2)

REFERENCES

"Old Testament Stories" (Redlich). "The Ancient Bible and the Modern Child" (Hollis). "The Period of the Patriarchs" (Harvey).

APPARATUS

B.B. sketch to represent early ideas of the Universe. [See Period of Patriarchs.] Map.

AIM

[As last week.] To trace the evolution of the Idea of God, and prepare the class to value more deeply the Christian Revelation of God.

INTRODUCTION

Last week we were thinking how because of the Divine Spark within them, from the earliest times men have been drawn to God, and of

the many different directions in which they pursued their search for Him. [Discuss answers to the problem set last week. Write up the following lines written by a Christian before an Image of Buddha :

" O Image may the God who would
That even evil bring forth good,
Use thy cold lips His Fatherhood
To tell."

See " Present Day Buddhism in Burma " (Purser).]

In their search for God, the Jews were the people who got nearer to the truth than any others, but at first even they knew very little about Him.

To-day we will think of the different stages they passed through before Our Blessed Lord came to show people what God was like.

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—*The Jewish Conception of God.*

Let us take our thoughts back to the time of Abraham, the Father of the Jewish Race. [Point out Abraham's birthplace on a map.]

Like all the people of his country, Abraham was brought up to worship the Sun, the Moon, and the Stars.

But Abraham was a Seeker, and by and by the worship of the gods of his people no longer contented him. Slowly there grew up within him a wonderful new conception of God, and the God Whom he beheld dimly but surely with the eyes of his soul, was above and behind all the things of nature, the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe, One Whom no Image made with hands could adequately represent.

Impelled by this vision Abraham " Went out not knowing whither he went " (Heb. xi. 8), to seek a new home where he could train his family to worship according to this fresh revelation.

Guided by God he came to that land which was to be the scene of the Supreme Revelation, the birthplace of God's own Son.

Stage 2.—*Belief in a National God.*

But though a great step forward had been made the Jews had still much to learn. At first they thought God was the God of their Nation only. [Cp. " Great is our God above all Gods " (2 Chron. ii. 5). Discuss.] But gradually God led them to realize that He was the

only God. [Cp. " I am the Lord and there is none else, there is no God beside Me " (Is. xlv, 5. See also Ps. cxxxv. 5).]

So the Jews passed from belief in a National God to belief in One God. [B.B.]

Stage 3.—Belief that God has a Human Form.

We also find that at first the Jews thought of God merely as a Great Man. [Cp. " And they heard the Voice of the Lord God walking in the Garden in the cool of the day " (Gen. iii. 8). Discuss.]

They did not understand either that He could be in more than one place at a time. [Show sketch of early ideas of universe.]

They thought that the earth was flat and round, and that the sky was a solid roof covering it as an inverted basin covers a plate. Above this they thought God dwelt, coming from time to time to visit the earth.

But as the years passed, God taught the Jews that He was a Spirit and present everywhere.

[Cp. " Whither shall I go then from Thy Spirit ; or whither shall I go then from Thy Presence " (Ps. cxxxix. 7).]

So from belief that God had a Human Form, the Jews passed to belief that God is a Spirit. [B.B.]

Stage 4.—Belief in a Warrior God.

Another mistaken idea was that God was a Warrior God. [Cp. " The Lord is a Man of War " (Ex. xv. 3. See also v. 6).] They thought that the heathen were God's enemies, and that in fighting against them and trying to exterminate them, they were doing His Will.

[Cp. " And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep and ass " (Josh. vi. 21).]

Slowly came the realization that though war might be necessary to protect the weak, and uphold justice, it was never God's will. So to Isaiah came a glorious vision of a Kingdom where there was perfect peace ruled over by One Who was called the " Prince of Peace," (Is. ix. 6). So the Jews passed from belief in a Warrior God to belief in a God of Peace. [B.B.]

Stage 5.—Belief in a Vindictive God.

For a long time there lingered the idea that God was a vindictive

God Who repaid with terrible punishments those who offended Him. [Let a class member read aloud 2 Kings ii. 24. Discuss.]

They also thought that if one member of a family sinned, God's Honour could only be vindicated by the punishment of the whole family. [Let class give instances, Cp. Josh. vii. 25.]

Later they learnt that though God hated sin, He loved the sinner. [Cp. "The Lord is gracious and merciful, long suffering and of great goodness" (Ps. cxlv. 8).]

So the Jews passed from belief in a Vindictive God to belief in a Merciful God. [B.B.]

HOME STUDY

Find other instances in the Old Testament of things being thought and said about God, which Our Blessed Lord has shown us were mistakes. Give the references to the New Testament passages which correct these mistakes.

SUMMARY

The Jewish Conception of God.

In the Old Testament we see how the Jews were led from :

1. Belief in a National God to belief in One God.
2. Belief that God has a Human Form, to belief that God is a Spirit.
3. Belief in a Warrior God to belief in a God of Peace.
4. Belief in a Vindictive God to belief in a Merciful God.

III.—THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION OF GOD

"The Father Almighty"

APPARATUS

Pictures of the Nativity and of Our Blessed Lord teaching.

AIM

To help the class to think of the Incarnation as God's Supreme Revelation of Himself.

INTRODUCTION

[Refer to some really beautiful and well-known Picture which has

been exhibited in the Royal Academy or some Art Gallery. Try to get the following points from the class:

(1) Many people have never had the opportunity to see that picture.

(2) Many have seen it, but their artistic faculties have not been sufficiently developed for them to really appreciate it.

(3) Many have seen it and been so irresistibly attracted, that they have gone again and again to gaze and learn more from it.]

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—*The Incarnation.*

[Hang up picture of the Nativity.]

On the first Christmas day Our Blessed Lord became Man in order that He might show men what God was like and supply all that was lacking in the Jewish Picture of God which had been developing so slowly through the ages: "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father" (S. John xiv. 9), He said. The Picture of God which He gave to us is absolutely perfect but,

(1) Many have not had the opportunity of seeing that picture. [Let the class suggest, the Heathen World, etc.]

(2) Many have seen it but their spiritual faculties have not been sufficiently developed for them to really appreciate it. [Let the class suggest, Unbelievers, nominal Christians, etc.]

(3) Many have seen it and been so irresistibly attracted that they long to gaze and gaze and learn more and more. [Let the class suggest that we can place in this class all who really want to learn more of God. Be particularly careful to help them to see that we can never get to the point where we have learnt all that there is to know. Our spiritual faculties only develop slowly, and we shall never in this life be able to see except "through a glass darkly" (1 Cor. xiii. 12).]

Stage 2.—*Our Father loves us.*

Let us think of some of the things we can learn by studying the Picture of God which Our Blessed Lord has given us.

[Hang up picture of Our Blessed Lord teaching.]

A great artist when he has painted in the groundwork of his picture, completes it with many fine touches of the brush. Sitting on the slopes of one of the hills of Galilee, Our Blessed Lord painted in the groundwork of His Picture, and laid the foundation of all His teaching,

when He taught His disciples to think of God as their Father and made them able to say not only " I believe in God," but " I believe in God the Father Almighty."

Then He began to add the finishing touches to His Picture, and explain what believing in the Fatherhood of God meant. The first thing He made plain was that Our Father loves us. [B.B.] He used some very wonderful illustrations to teach this. [Let class suggest parables of the Prodigal Son, Lost Sheep, etc.] The Love of God is such a tremendously big thing that nothing we can do can kill it.

We can insult God, we can hurt Him, but His Love never changes and we have only to look at the Cross to see its power.

It was God Who suffered there : what He suffered was borne for us : " And greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends " (S. John xv. 13).

Stage 3.—Our Father is interested in each of us.

Then Our Blessed Lord showed us that Our Father is interested in each of us. [B.B.]

When we think of the millions of people living and departed, who call God " Father," this seems hard to believe, but it is true. [Let class study S. John x. 3, S. Luke xii. 7, S. Matt. vi. 32.]

God knows each one of us by name, the hairs of our head are all numbered, nothing happens to us without God knowing.

Stage 4.—Our Father has a plan for each of us.

Then too Our Father has a plan for each of us. [B.B.]

God wants us each to fill a particular place in the world, and He offers us the power to become what He wants us to be. [Discuss Acts ix. 15.] It is for us to decide if we will fulfil His hopes or disappoint Him.

Stage 5.—Our Father wants our love.

Our Blessed Lord told us too that Our Father wants our love. [B.B. Discuss with the class how we can show our love for God. Especially help them to see how love should be the motive behind the performance of all our religious duties.]

God likes us to come to Him and talk to Him about all the little everyday things of life and misses us when we don't come. Yet there are people who never talk to God unless they want to ask Him for something. [Discuss.]

God likes us to come to His House where His special Presence is promised: but there are people who will let the weeks and the months and the years slip by without going there. [Discuss.]

Stage 6.—Our Father wants us to love all men as Brothers.

Our Blessed Lord showed us too how Our Father wants us to love all men as Brothers. [B.B.]

If we don't then we are hurting Him, for so real is His love for His children that He feels all their sorrows and all their joys. [Let a class member read aloud S. Matt. xxv. 40. Discuss.]

In the Book of the Revelation we get a glorious vision of the day when all will own God as their Father, and each other as brothers. [Read aloud slowly Rev. vii. 9.]

HOME STUDY

Find in the New Testament illustrations of the points in the Lesson Summary.

SUMMARY

The Christian Revelation of God.

Because God is our Father:

(1) He loves us.
(2) He is interested in each of us.
(3) He has a plan for each of us.
(4) He wants our love.
(5) He wants us to love all men as Brothers.

IV.—GOD THE CREATOR

"Maker of Heaven and Earth"

REFERENCES

"The Interpretation of Nature" (Farquhar). [The writer wishes to acknowledge her indebtedness to the Author of this little book from which much of the material for this lesson was obtained.] "Century Atlas." "The Way of Worship" (Lee).

APPARATUS

[Optional.] Diagrams to show the (*a*) Comparative size of the chief planets; (*b*) Their distance from the sun. See "Century Atlas."

AIM

To help the class to understand how " the Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth His Handiwork " (Ps. xix. 1).

INTRODUCTION

We have been thinking of the opening words of the Apostles' Creed.
[Write on B.B. " I believe in God the Father Almighty."]
To-day we will think of the words which come next.
[Write on B.B. " Maker of Heaven and Earth."]

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—Maker of Heaven and Earth.

When we say these words we are saying we believe that in God all the things that we can see, and all the things that we cannot see had their origin.

We can learn a great deal about other people by studying their work. [Discuss this and let the class supply illustrations. A person's work tells us if he is thorough and painstaking, careless and slipshod, etc.]

In somewhat the same way we can learn about God by studying the things which He has made, and the Psalmist says, " The Heavens declare the Glory of God and the Firmament sheweth His Handiwork " (Ps. xix. 1).

Stage 2.—Some Wonders of the Universe. (1) *Vastness.*

As we think of God's work in creation one of the first things we notice is the vastness of the Universe. [B.B. Discuss the following]:

(*a*) The tallest man in the world, if he were photographed at the foot of a very high mountain, would be so small in comparison that we should not be able to distinguish him on the picture. A liner which seems very large when it is in port, on reaching the open sea only looks like a tiny speck on the vast expanse of water. Travellers who have visited the prairies of America, or the deserts of Africa, never fail to be impressed by the sense of their vastness. Yet our earth is one of the smallest of the planets. [Show diagram.]

(*b*) The sun is 1,300,000 times bigger than the earth and is so far away that travelling sixty miles an hour day and night it would take us 176 years to get there, for the distance is 93,000,000 miles. Yet there are other suns bigger and further off. [Show Diagram.] The

light that comes to us from the nearest star travels at the rate of 186,000 miles a second, but it takes four years to reach us.

Stage 3.—Some Wonders of the Universe. (2) *Order.*

But the size of the Universe is no more wonderful than the order which prevails there. [B.B.]

When one remembers that no one of the countless millions of stars and planets is ever still; when one thinks of the comets and the swarms of shooting stars which come rushing out of space in and out among them, then indeed one marvels that there is no confusion.

Each sun, moon, star, planet, comet, has its appointed course, and astronomers can tell exactly where each will appear in the sky at any given time for hundreds of years to come. The most perfect machine ever made with human hands never worked with such regularity.

Every day the sun rises in the East and sets in the West; Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter, follow one another, and we are so accustomed to these things that we scarcely notice them.

Stage 4.—Some Wonders of the Universe. (3) *Power.*

Another thing continually brought to our notice is the tremendous power stored up in little things as well as big ones. [B.B.]

A single flash of lightning can bring to the ground a building it took many years to erect.

A tiny creature, so small that it can only be seen with the help of a microscope, can attack and kill a man.

[Let class discuss the power of wind, water, electricity, etc.]

Stage 5.—Some Wonders of the Universe. (4) *Life.*

But more wonderful than any of the other things we discover when we study the Universe, is life.

Whether one is considering the life of a plant, an animal, or a human being, one is face to face with a mystery.

Each has the power under certain conditions to hand on life and produce others of its kind, but who gave life to the first plant, the first animal, the first man?

Stage 6.—Some Wonders of the Universe. (5) *Evolution.*

Another interesting point is that all the things we see in the Universe to-day have only become what they are now very, very gradually.

Once upon a time the air was filled with clouds made up of tiny particles of burning silvery dust. Then these clouds began to draw together and great masses of molten rock, like balls of flame, whirled through space. Finally these balls of flame began to cool and harden, though not all to the same degree, and our own world system was evolved. [Discuss.]

Stage 7.—In the Beginning.

It is impossible to think of these things without realizing that such a wonderful thing as the Universe must, in the dim ages that are past, have been planned by Someone Who still controls and directs it, and Who is infinitely greater than man. All sorts of folk songs and stories grew up as men tried to account for this.

We have two in our Bibles which have been altered and turned into beautiful parables by two Jewish writers to teach us the truth that "In the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth" (Gen. i. 1).

[Discuss the Creation Stories as time permits. Quote verse given in Lesson Summary.]

HOME STUDY

Describe what you consider to be the most wonderful of all the marvels of the World of Nature.

SUMMARY

God the Creator.

"The Heavens declare the Glory of God and the Firmament sheweth His Handiwork" (Ps. xix. 1). Among the Wonders of the Universe are Vastness, Order, Power, Life and Evolution.

"God Who hast given me eyes to see
And love this World so fair.
Give me a heart to find out Thee
And read Thee everywhere."

[A. & M. 168]

V.—MAN. (1) THE POWERS OF THE BODY

REFERENCES

"Out of the Silence" (Rhoades). [Unless otherwise stated, all

quotations in this lesson are from this little book of verse.] "Straight Talk Series" (S.P.C.K.). "Temples of the Holy Ghost" (Bull).

APPARATUS

Roller Blackboard with quotations written out, to be unrolled as required.

AIM

To arouse reverence for the Body and all its Powers, and a desire to use them in the Service of God.

INTRODUCTION

Last week when we were talking about God's work in creation we said practically nothing about the most wonderful of all created things. [Uncover B.B. so class can read the following lines:

> "Thou ponderest of the Moon, the Stars, the Sun,
> Whence the wind gathers, how the waters run,
> But all too lightly deemest of thyself
> Which art a myriad miracles in one."]

For the next three weeks we will think about Man and his Powers. Each one of us is made up of three parts.

[Uncover B.B. so class can read the following lines:

> "I made thee three in one, and one in three,
> Spirit and mind and form, immortal whole,
> Divine and undivided trinity."]

To-day let us think of the powers of our bodies.

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—*The Parable of the Two Houses.*

Once upon a time there were two very beautiful houses, built and designed so that the people who were to live in them should have everything they needed to make them happy. When they were finished, the Owner, who was also the Architect and the Builder, gave them to two friends. The years passed by and the two friends still went on living in those houses, but no one would have thought they had once been just alike.

One was kept beautifully clean and was always in good repair. The other was dirty and neglected and many things in it were spoilt.

This story is of course a parable. [Let class suggest meaning.]

To every Human Being, God gives the beautiful house we call his body, a house which is very beautifully designed and made.

[Cp. " I am fearfully and wonderfully made " (Ps. cxxxix. 14).]

Some people take care of their bodies, others do not. God, because He is the Architect and the Builder, must be sad when He sees a neglected body.

Stage 2.—" The Spirit of God dwelleth in you."

There is another reason more wonderful still for taking care of our bodies.

[Uncover B.B. and let class discover it from these lines. God :—

" Formed all the Universe Divine,
And slowly cell by cell
Built up thy body for a shrine,
Wherein Himself might dwell."]

God wants to be the Guest in the house He has given us to live in.

[Let the class find 1 Cor. iii. 16-17. Read aloud : " Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you ? "]

Stage 3.—Self-Reverence.

If we would keep our bodies as God likes to see them, Tennyson tells us that three things are necessary :

" Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power."

Self-reverence is similar to self-respect. The man who does not respect himself is not treating his body as he ought.

It was made by God, God dwells within it, and to misuse or neglect it is an insult to Him.

[Discuss cleanliness, care of one's personal appearance, etc.]

Stage 4.—Self-Knowledge.

Then there is self-knowledge. We ought all to know enough about the care of our bodies to prevent us doing things which will harm

them. [Discuss when it is right and when it is wrong to risk personal injury. Let class give instances of both. Talk informally about smoking too much or too soon, taking no exercise, etc.]

Stage 5.—Self-Control.

Last, but most important of all, comes Self-Control.

God intended all the powers of the body to be under the control of the mind and the spirit.

People who say they cannot get up in the morning, or that they cannot help eating or drinking more than they should, have allowed themselves to become the slaves of their bodies. [Discuss the value of observing the Church's fast days.]

Stage 6.—A Sacred Trust.[1]

[Be prepared to substitute something else for this section, if the atmosphere is not right.]

The most wonderful of all the powers of the body is so intensely beautiful and sacred that we never even speak of it except at special times with those whom we know and trust.

It is our power to hand on life, and become fathers and mothers. God could have peopled the world by constantly creating more men and women, but instead He decided to trust us with the power of bringing into existence tiny helpless beings possessing souls which can never die.

This is a tremendously high honour, and God has made wise laws about the use of this power, which is longer developing than any other power we have.

God knew that the best possible thing for a little child was for it to be brought up in a happy home by a father and mother who were partners for life. So He arranged that in order to bring a new life into existence a man and a woman must co-operate, and that before taking such a solemn step they must obtain His Blessing and His permission through the Sacrament of Holy Marriage.

When love and marriage are not God's Will for us, then that power must be guarded with all possible care, so that we may give it back to Him again unused, unspoilt, perfect as we received it from Him.

HOME STUDY

Think out ways in which we can develop and use in God's Service any of the powers of the body.

[1] See Appendix (*c*).

SUMMARY

Man. (1) *The Powers of the Body.*

S. Paul says: "The Spirit of God dwelleth in you" (1 Cor. iii. 16). If we would make our bodies worthy dwelling-places for Him we must have

Self Reverence.
Self Knowledge.
Self Control.

VI.—MAN. (2) THE POWERS OF THE MIND

REFERENCES

"Religious Education" (Smith). "The Machinery of the Mind" (Frith).

AIM

To interest the class in the working of the mind and to help them to realize the importance of S. Paul's injunction: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report . . . think on these things" (Phil. iv. 8).

INTRODUCTION

To-day we are going to think about the powers of our mind.

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—*The Mind and its Divisions.*

[Note to the Leader: The following illustration is used with some trepidation as it is liable to misinterpretation. There should however be no danger of this if sufficient emphasis is laid on two points:

(1) That at no time in life does the mind resemble a storehouse which is quite empty. We are born with instincts and tendencies and endowed with natural gifts which make us, in infancy, potential musicians, artists, etc.

(2) That the reception of new ideas by the mind is largely determined by the ideas already there. It is not therefore possible to fill

a child's mind with useful knowledge, as one would fill a storehouse with useful articles. We have to find out something about the ideas already there, and having found our point of contact, lead on from the known to the unknown.]

Our mind is like a storehouse in which, carefully sorted and arranged, are all the ideas we have ever had. In this storehouse are four divisions or rooms.

(1) In the highest room is the idea we are thinking of most. [B.B.]

(2) Beneath this, separated by a very thin partition, is the room in which are a number of ideas which are trying to attract our attention. Each of these ideas wants to make us open the door into the room above, so that it can get in and drive out the idea that is already there. [B.B.]

[Illustrate this. We are interested in something and a sudden noise distracts us. The idea of the noise drives out the idea of whatever we had been interested in.]

(3) In the room below this, separated by a rather thicker partition, are stored the hundreds and thousands of ideas which have entered our mind at different times, but of which at the moment we are not thinking. [B.B.] Again there is a door leading from this room to the room above, and at any moment something may happen which will open this door and let through one of the ideas. We call this power to call up ideas from our unconscious into our conscious mind, memory. [Discuss.]

(4) The lowest room in the mind is a very mysterious one, and we know very little about it. A very thick partition separates it from the other rooms, and in it are stored ideas which, because they were painful, or for some other reason, the mind has tried to get rid of. [B.B.] Whenever they have tried to come up into consciousness they have been forced back, until they have become buried so deeply that the memory had no longer power to recall them, though they still influence us.

Stage 2.—How Ideas enter the Mind.

Ideas entering the mind from without must come to the top room first and pass into the lower rooms afterwards. In the top room are seven doors which in the normal person are always wide open unless they are asleep. [Continue B.B. diagram.] We call these seven doors our seven senses. [Let class tell how through the

(1) Eye Gate, come ideas of things we see.

(2) Ear Gate, come ideas of things we hear.
(3) Nose Gate, come ideas of things we smell.
(4) Mouth Gate, come ideas of things we taste.
(5) Touch Gate, come ideas of things we feel.
(6) Temperature Gate, come ideas of heat and cold.
(7) Muscular Gate, come ideas of bodily movements, pain, discomfort.

Stage 3.—How Ideas are arranged in the Mind.

In any big library, books of one kind are all arranged together, and in the mind ideas which have some connexion with each other form groups. [Illustrate by some practical test in which all the class can join ; e.g. put a large dot on the B.B. Write " seaside " beneath it, and let each member tell in turn what ideas this word brings to their minds. Put small dots for these, and draw lines connecting them with the large dot. Show how it is because these ideas form one group in the mind that, when one comes up into our consciousness, the others are liable to follow.]

Stage 4.—How Ideas are retained in the Mind.

But there is an interesting point about the retention of ideas by the mind. When a new idea comes to one of the doors of the mind it looks around to see if there are other ideas like itself. If it sees a group of nice friendly ideas it goes and joins them, if not it sometimes passes away altogether. We shall see presently why this is important to remember.

Stage 5.—How Ideas become Actions.

Yet another important point is that ideas are very active things. Every word we say, every deed we do, is the result of some idea present in our mind.

Illustrate this. We come into a room on a cold day and see a fire. The sight of the fire brings to our mind the idea that a fire is warm. The mind sends messages to our feet and hands, and we find ourselves walking towards it, and holding out our hands to the blaze.]

Stage 6.—The Control of the Mind.

Let us see how knowing something about the mind will help us to

keep it the clean and beautiful thing God wants it to be. [Discuss the following points as informally as possible.]

(1) *We should try to avoid whatever suggests wrong ideas to the Mind.*

The doors into our mind are always open and as far as possible we want to avoid listening to dirty conversations, looking at dirty books or pictures; for otherwise it will be difficult to prevent dirty thoughts getting into our mind.

[Let a class member read aloud Phil. iv, 8. "Whatsoever things are true . . . think on these things."]

(2) *We should refuse to admit wrong ideas when they are suggested to our Minds.*

Many people have to spend their lives in evil surroundings, but it is quite possible for them to keep their minds pure and white. We cannot always forget some evil thought which has come to us, but if we send it away at once into the group made up of ideas we hate and detest, it will lose its power to do us harm.

[This point provoked a lengthy discussion in the class with whom this lesson was taken. Many young people grow up with the idea that a knowledge of evil must bring loss of innocency, and suffer accordingly.]

(3) *We should remember that thoughts lead to words, actions, habits, and so form character.*

[Write up and discuss the well-known lines: "Sow a thought, reap an act. Sow an act, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a character. Sow a character, reap a destiny." Thoughts of evil, disease, misery, lead to sin, illness, unhappiness; Thoughts of goodness, health, happiness will help to bring us these things.]

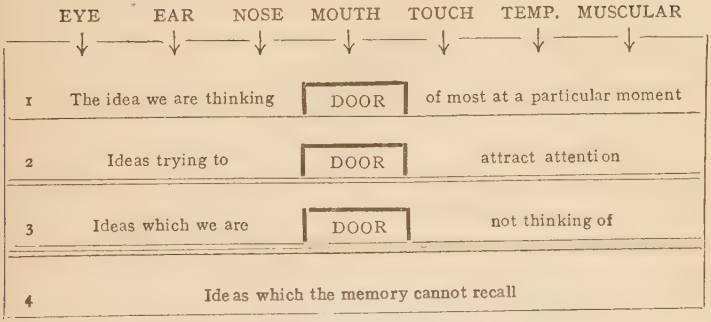
HOME STUDY

Read S. Matt. xii, 43–45. What do you think these verses teach us about the control of the mind?

SUMMARY

"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, ... think on these things" (Phil. iv, 8).

Man (2) *The Powers of the Mind*



VII—MAN (3) THE POWERS OF THE SOUL

REFERENCES

"Out of the Silence" (Rhoades). [See all quotations marked with an asterisk.]

APPARATUS

Roller B.B. with quotations written out as for Lesson V.

AIM

To help the class to see the importance of developing the powers of the soul and using them to control the mind and the body.

INTRODUCTION

We have thought of the powers of our body, and the powers of our mind. To-day we will think about the powers of our soul.

[Unroll B.B. so class can read these lines:

> "Mind sees by spirit, body moves by mind:
> Divorced from spirit both way-wildered fall.
> Leader and led, the blindfold and the blind." *

Discuss, helping class to see that if the body is controlled by the mind, and the mind is controlled by the spirit, the spirit really controls both.]

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—What is our Soul?

Let us try to answer the question, "What is our soul?"

[Let class read silently Gen. ii. 7.]

In this beautiful old story we are told that God first of all created man's body, and then God "Breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul."

God gave man something which made him different from the plants, different from the animals, and that something we call his soul. God breathed into man a little bit of His own Life and man became the possessor of a soul made "In the image of God" (Gen. i. 27).

Many people think that it was not until years after the first men appeared on the earth that God placed this Divine Spark within them and they became "living souls"; but it is not really important for us to know whether this is so or not.

Stage 2.—The Soul's power to know God.

It is because we have souls that we can know God. [B.B.]

Plants and animals are alive, but because they have no souls they cannot know God as we do.

Just as a river never stops until it reaches the sea, so that little bit of God's own Life within us never rests until it gets into touch with Him from Whom it came. [Refer to Lesson I.]

Stage 3.—The Soul's power to become like God.

Then our soul has power to become like God. [B.B.]

When man sinned the "Image of God" in his soul was no longer perfect, and the whole aim of the Christian's life is to restore it. When we are baptized all that would hinder the growth of the God-likeness in us is washed away, and we are pledged "To follow the example of our Saviour Christ and to be made like unto Him." [See Baptism Service, Exhortation to godparents.] If the Godlikeness has begun to grow in us on earth, then it will go on growing in Paradise, and at the end of the World we shall "Wake up after His likeness and be satisfied with it" (Ps. xvii. 15).

Stage 4.—The Soul's power to get into touch with God.

Our soul has also power to get into touch with God. [B.B.]

Unless we use this power and let God's life go on flowing into us we shall find that instead of growing and developing, as He meant it

to, our soul is like a river whose waters are gradually drying up. [Discuss the following points informally.]

(1) *We must let nothing come between us and God.*

Just as quantities of dirt and weeds piled at the mouth of a river prevent it flowing smoothly into the sea, so the wrong things we do become like a barrier which makes it harder for us to reach God, harder for Him to reach us. [Let class read Is. lix. 2.] Some people have let that barrier get so high they feel they can never get back close to God again, but directly the wrong things of which it is built are repented of and forgiven, it disappears. [Let class read S. James iv. 8.]

(2) *We must keep close to God through Prayer.*

When we pray our soul reaches out towards God, and He stoops down and touches us. Each time we come into touch with God in this way we become a little more like Him.

(3) *We must receive God's Life in the Blessed Sacrament.*

The most wonderful way of getting into touch with God is of course in the Blessed Sacrament, for What we receive in Holy Communion is God's own Life.

"He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My Blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in Him" (S. John vi. 56).

Stage 5.—*The Soul's power of intercommunication.*

(1) *The Ears of our Soul.*—Our soul has the power of hearing, and with the ears of our soul we can receive messages from other Spirits. [B.B.]

God speaks to us and we hear His Voice.

There are wonderful moments when we feel sure we can also hear the voices of the Holy Angels and of the Blessed Dead.

Many of us know what it is to receive a message from some friend far away who was thinking of us, and whose soul was able to get into touch with our soul, without the use of any bodily senses. [Contrast this with the methods of spiritualists. Show how this intercommunication of spirits is quite distinct from what is known as spiritualism.]

(2) *The Voice of our Soul.*—As our soul has the power of receiving messages from other spirits, so it has the power of sending them. [B.B.]

(3) *The Eyes of our Soul.*—Our soul also has eyes. [B.B.] Many people never realize what wonderful things can be seen with the eyes

of the soul, and so they keep them tight shut like the people of whom Our Blessed Lord said, " Their eyes have they closed " (S. Matt. xiii. 16). If we really try to use the eyes of our soul then from time to time God will allow us to see glimpses of that Unseen World which is all around us. [Discuss.

" O World Invisible we view thee.
O World Unknowable we know thee,
Inapprehensible we clutch thee."]

HOME STUDY

Find instances in the Bible of people hearing with the ears of their soul, speaking with the voice of their soul, or seeing with the eyes of their soul.

SUMMARY

Man (3) *The Powers of the Soul.*

God " breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul " (Gen. ii. 7). Our Soul has power: (1) to know God; (2) to become like Him; (3) to get into touch with Him, especially through prayer and the Blessed Sacrament; (4) to receive messages from the Spirit World; (5) to send messages back there; (6) to see occasional glimpses of its Glory.

These powers will be weak unless we use and develop them.

VIII.—MAN'S DEBT TO GOD

APPARATUS

Picture of the Unknown Warrior's Grave.

AIM

To arouse in the class a desire to respond to the love of God.

INTRODUCTION

The subjects we have been considering together during the last three weeks have brought home to us the tremendous debt which we owe to God for all that He has done for us.

He has given us this beautiful world to be our home:

He has endowed us with wonderful powers of body, mind, and soul. Every moment of our lives His Love is surrounding us, and it is an everlasting Love (Jer. xxxi. 3). God says:

> "Tilt at My Laws, and curse where thou shouldst bless,
> I am all Love, I cannot love thee less."

As we think of His Love we find ourselves asking,

> "How can we show our love to Thee
> Who givest all?"

There is a very beautiful prayer which was written about four hundred years ago by S. Ignatius of Loyola (born 1491), which gives us some very helpful thoughts about this.

[If the class are not familiar with the prayer, have the whole of it written up first. If they are, write it sentence by sentence.]

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—"*Teach us, Good Lord, to serve Thee as Thou deservest.*" [B.B.]

The opening words are a prayer for something which will never be possible in this life, for on earth we shall never be able to serve God as He deserves to be served.

But we want to be ever on the look out for ways in which we can serve Him, and be ready to answer His Call when it comes. [Discuss this. Let class find S. Matt. xxv. 40. Talk over with them how we may serve God by serving our fellow-men.]

Stage 2.—"*To Give and not to count the cost.*" [B.B.]

The next petition is very beautiful.

We know if we put a sponge in a basin of water it will soak up as much water as it can hold, and unless we squeeze it, it will not give any back again.

Some people are like sponges; they are out to get all they can, but, unless they are forced to, they never give anything back. [Illustrate this. In the ex-Emperor of Germany we have the sad spectacle of one who was once great brought low, because he was out to get and not to give. He is a figure who arouses our pity, but not our admiration. In contrast to him we have the "Unknown Warrior," one who became great simply because he was out to give. Show picture of the grave. Discuss.]

Opportunities of giving come to us in many ways.

[Discuss how we may give our time, our talents, our money to God to be used in His Service.]

More than all other gifts, God likes the offering of ourselves. [Cp. Prayer of Oblation. Quote :

> " Just as we are, young, strong, and free
> To be the best that we can be,
> For truth, for righteousness, and Thee.
> Lord of our lives we come."]

Stage 3.—" *To Fight, and not to heed the wounds.*" [B.B.]

The words which come next are a prayer we all need to use.

To be a true Christian and wage war on the powers of evil is sure to bring us face to face with ridicule and persecution, things which hurt more than any physical injury can. [Let class discuss.] But when we feel the smart is more than we can bear it is a help to remember that the scar of every wound we bear voluntarily for Him is precious in God's eyes.

As we look at the Crucifix none of us think of Our Blessed Lord's Wounds as disfigurements. To us They are things of beauty, because They are the proof of His Love.

So perhaps we may think that when we suffer for His sake we become a little more lovely in His eyes.

[Discuss the following lines :

> " If Thou shouldst speak, my Christ,
> My Leader and my King,
> And bid me lay my wounds in sight—
> The wounds borne just for Thee in fight—
> What love scars should I bring ? "

How terrible it would be to have to own that we had never voluntarily suffered anything for Him, that our love was too weak !]

Stage 4.—" *To Toil and not to seek for rest.*" [B.B.]

The next words remind us of the need for perseverance. It is so easy to be keen about a thing at first, and then to get slack. The devil never gets slack, and unless we mean to let him have things his own way we must offer more than a passive resistance. [Let the class read and discuss Rev. ii. 4.]

Christian Workers are needed in every part of the Church and to all of us comes the call :

" Come labour on, spend and be spent."

[Try to get the discussion on this point on to practical lines, if possible suggesting bits of work which could be undertaken by members or by the class as a whole.]

Stage 5.—" *To Labour and not to ask for any reward save that of knowing that we do Thy Will.*" [B.B.]

It is very interesting to think that these words were written so long ago, for they represent an ideal which was lost sight of for a time, and is now being held up to us again.

[Discuss the ideas of reward and punishment underlying threats one sometimes hears used to children, e.g. " If you do that, you won't go to Heaven," or " If you do that, God will be angry." Help the class to see that the highest motive for right conduct is love, and the fear of hurting God ; and that the highest kind of love is content to pour itself out upon the loved one without any thought of reward.

Let a class member, or the Leader, read aloud verses 1, 5 and 6 of Hymn 106, A. & M.]

HOME STUDY

Say why you think a Christian of to-day needs to use any of the petitions in the Prayer of S. Ignatius.

SUMMARY

Man's Debt to God.

" Teach us, Good Lord, to serve Thee as Thou deservest,
To give and not to count the cost,
To fight and not to heed the wounds,
To toil and not to seek for rest,
To labour and not to ask for any reward, save that of knowing that we do Thy Will " (S. Ignatius Loyola ; born 1491).

[Illuminated copies are published by Messrs. Mowbray at twopence each.]

IX.—GOD'S BOOK. THE MEANING OF INSPIRATION

REFERENCES

"Our Bible in the Making" (Paterson Smythe). "The Ancient Bible and the Modern Child" (Hollis).

APPARATUS

Chart of the Books of the Bible. Map of the World. Model of Arab's tent.

AIM

To help the class to understand what we mean when we say "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. iii. 16).

INTRODUCTION

[Discuss how the reading of a particular book arouses one's interest in the author.]

To-day we are going to think about a number of Great Writers whose books, carefully copied out by hand for hundreds of years before the invention of printing, are read to-day by people of every colour and every race in their own language.

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—*The Library of the Bible.*

[Hang up chart of the Books of the Bible grouped under the following headings, or any which the Leader may prefer.]

So many people find the Bible dull because they think of it as one Book. It becomes so much more interesting if one thinks of it as a collection of different kinds of books written in different countries, by different people, at different times.

The Old Testament contains thirty-nine books, the New Testament twenty-seven, and the Apocrypha fourteen—eighty altogether. Many of these books are not the work of one writer only.

[Refer to the composite origin of the Hexateuch very briefly, as the explanation of our having in many instances two slightly different accounts of the same event.] Our Bible includes:

(1) *Folk Songs and Stories.*—Before reading and writing were known nearly every nation had its favourite songs and stories which were

handed down from father to son. In our Bible we have many such old, old songs and old, old stories.

[Discuss. Let class suggest any such songs and stories. Show model of tent. Picture a Hebrew Storyteller with a little group of listeners round the camp-fire, telling the Story of the Creation.]

(2) *National Songs.*—Besides songs and stories with no historical foundation most nations have a number written to commemorate great events. [Cp. Tennyson's "Welcome to Alexandra."]

In our Bible we find many songs scattered through the different Books, and particularly among the Psalms, which commemorate events of national importance. We find Songs of triumph after a great victory, Songs of lament after the death of a Leader, Songs for use at weddings and funerals.

[Let class supply examples, e.g. Exodus xv.]

(3) *Hymns.*—Besides Folk Songs and National Songs, our Bible contains many Hymns used by the Hebrews in their own homes and when they met for worship in the Tabernacle and Temple. It is inspiring to think of the countless numbers of men and women before us who have joined in singing, as we do to-day, "The Lord is My Shepherd, I shall not want" (Ps. xxiii. 1).

(4) *History.*—We find also in our Bible, Books which tell us something about the history of the Hebrews from the time of Abraham up to the birth of Our Blessed Lord, and others which tell us about the Early Christian Church. [Let class notice the historical Books on the chart.] We also have Books of

(5) *Laws*, and extracts from Books of

(6) *Statistics*, made when a census was taken (e.g. Numbers).

(7) *Sermons.* We have, too, a number of Books of Sermons written by great Preachers, or those who heard them.

(8) *A Play.*—The Book of Job we might almost call a Play. It is a dramatic poem, in which the different characters speak to each other.

(9) *A Novel.*—The Book of Esther is a novel with no direct mention of God.

(10) *Letters.*—We have also twenty-one letters written by S. Paul and others. [Discuss.]

(11) Visions. [Discuss. Refer to Book of the Revelation.]

Stage 2.—The Writers of our Bible.

We do not know the names of many of the Writers of these Books

but among them were men of many different ranks and professions. There were Prophets, Priests, and Kings :

There was a great Soldier and a great Lawgiver : [One can assume the Pentateuch contains extracts from the writings of Moses.]

There was a Tax Collector, a Rich Man of Leisure, a Doctor, some Fishermen, and a Man educated in one of the most famous Universities of the day :

Some wrote in Palestine, some in Egypt, some in Babylon, some in Greece, some in Asia Minor, and some in Italy.

The earliest writer wrote nearly nine hundred years before the Birth of Our Blessed Lord, the latest nearly one hundred years after.

Stage 3.—The Meaning of Inspiration.

But we have to find out why, while other Books have been lost and forgotten, these Books have been preserved, and are reverenced to-day above all others.

[Discuss the attraction of the "Unknown," and of the danger and discomfort men like Sir Ernest Shackleton will face in order to unveil its mysteries.]

From very early times there have been men who heard the "Call of the Unknown" from the Spirit World and set out to try and find God, and discover more of the wonders of that world which is hidden from sight. Among these Pioneers were the men who wrote our Bible. Because they were looking for Him, God was able to show them more of His Glory than He could show to others. [Illustrate : I cannot show you what you will not look at.] The men who wrote our Bible were Seekers, and so they were given wonderful visions of God's Beauty, God's Holiness, and God's Love, and were used by God to pass on that knowledge to others. [Discuss Prov. viii. 17 ; 2 Tim. iii. 16 ; 2 S. Pet. i. 21.] There are three things we want to remember if we would really understand their writings :

(1) *The Bible is meant to teach us about God.* [Discuss how people sometimes find fault with the Bible because the writers knew less than we do about history, geography, and science. The Bible is not meant to teach these things.]

(2) *The Writers often wrapped up the precious truths they wanted to teach in the form of allegories.* [Discuss and cp. with Our Blessed Lord's parables.]

(3) *God has only been able to reveal Himself gradually to men, and*

writers living before the Incarnation knew less than later writers. [Refer to Lessons I and II, in which this point was dealt with more fully.]

HOME STUDY

Write down any difficulty met with in Bible Study which you would like discussed.

SUMMARY

God's Book. The Meaning of Inspiration.

The men who wrote our Bible were Pioneers who had heard the "Call of the Unknown" from the Spirit World, and had set out to learn more of God and the land "Within the Veil." Their writings tell us their experiences, and the truths they discovered are wrapped up in (1) Folk Songs and Stories, (2) National Songs, (3) Hymns, (4) History, (5) Laws, (6) Statistics, (7) Sermons, (8) A Play, (9) A Novel, (10) Letters, (11) Visions.

X.—GOD'S HOUSE. THE MEANING OF WORSHIP

APPARATUS

Large picture or model of Parish Church.

AIM

To help the class to answer the question, "Why do we go to Church?"

INTRODUCTION

[Write on B.B. "Why do we go to Church?"]

This seems a very easy question, yet probably we should each of us reply to it differently. Let us try to-day to compare all the possible answers, and so find out what to say when people tell us that they do not see the good of going to church.

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—*Our Church belongs to God.* [B.B.]

Probably we should all agree that the first reason for going to church is that our Church belongs to God and He has promised to be present there in a very special way.

[Tell how when a new church is consecrated, though the form varies slightly in different dioceses, it is usual for the Bishop, as he enters, to pray, "Enter, O Lord, this House, we beseech Thee, that this House which is built for Thy Glory, may be glorified also by Thine Abiding Presence."

Let the class find in 1 Kings ix. 3 a promise which we feel sure is made afresh in answer to that prayer.]

God is present everywhere, but because He knew we should need some quiet place where we could come apart to be with Him, He gives us the opportunity by promising this special Presence in our churches. It is because our church is in a very real sense "Our Father's House" that we like to make it as beautiful as possible. [Discuss this, helping the class to see that it is a tremendous honour to help in keeping the church clean, polishing brass, arranging flowers, and so on.]

Stage 2.—Our Church belongs to God's Children as Individuals. [B.B.]

Another reason for going to church is that our Church belongs to God's children as individuals, and He wants them to come there to be with Him.

Our Church is the Home where every child of God can always find his Father.

Rich and poor, young and old, learned and ignorant, black and white, sinner and saint, all are welcome there, and all are of equal value in God's eyes.

That is why it makes one sad to go to a place where the church is locked. We like our churches to be open all day. [Discuss the following:

(1) One church in London is now kept open all night as well as all day. The lights are lit, and all through the night people are coming and going. Many of them are people who would be ashamed to be seen there during the day, prodigal sons who have nearly forgotten that they are God's children—nearly, but not quite.

Watching through the night are two or three priests and women workers ready to give a helping hand to the brother or sister in need.

(2) Anyone who has stayed in France or Italy cannot fail to have noticed how the people use their churches. They are never empty. Women with their market baskets, men in their working clothes, all think it the most natural thing in the world, as they go to and from their work, to slip into the church and, kneeling down in the Presence of their Father, say a short prayer and go their way.

(3) In one of our cathedrals an attempt is being made to introduce the same kind of feeling. The side chapels are being set apart for the use of different societies, so that the members may have a place for private prayer. There is one for the Men's Society, one for the Mothers' Union, one for the Scouts, another for the Guides, etc.]

Stage 3.—Our Church belongs to God's Children as a Family. [B.B.]

Yet another reason for going to church is that our Church belongs to God's Children as a Family.

God likes us to come to Him with all our personal troubles and joys, but He also likes us to meet in His House as brothers and sisters in the Family of which He is the Father.

Perhaps God was afraid that if His Children never met together in His House they would grow selfish and forget they were brothers and sisters at all.

So He promised a special blessing when they met together to worship. [Let class find and discuss S. Matt. xviii. 20. Talk over the opportunities for corporate worship provided in the Parish Church.]

Stage 4.—The Meaning of Worship.

But there is a still more important reason for going to church. We come to church not only to get something from God but to give something to Him. That something we call worship. It has been said that "Worship is the response of the soul to the realization of God's Presence." [B.B. Discuss the effect of this realization. Directly our soul becomes conscious of God's Presence it reaches out towards Him.

Sometimes in perfect silence staying close to Him and enjoying the sunshine of His Love.

Sometimes with words of adoration.

Sometimes with songs of thanksgiving.

Sometimes in intercession.

Sometimes with a prayer for help.

Sometimes with a confession of failure.

In all these ways our soul may respond to the realization of God's Presence, and all may be a part of Worship. Write on B.B.:

"Speak to Him then for He heareth,
And spirit with spirit can meet.
Nearer is He than breathing,
Closer than hands and feet."]

Stage 5.—Difficulties in Worship.

But worship is not always easy. So often we go home from church without having really worshipped at all, because we have not concentrated our thoughts on God's Presence. [Quote and discuss these lines :

> " Our words fly up, our thoughts remain below,
> Prayers without thoughts never to Heaven go."]

HOME STUDY

Write down any reasons people have given you for not going to church and say how you answered them.

SUMMARY

God's House. The Meaning of Worship.

Our Church belongs to :

(1) God, for there is His Special Presence.
(2) God's children as Individuals.
(3) God's children as a Family.

" Worship is the response of the soul to the realization of God's Presence."

> " Speak to Him then for He heareth,
> And spirit with spirit can meet.
> Nearer is He than breathing,
> Closer than hands and feet."

XI.—GOD'S FAMILY.
THE MEANING OF BROTHERHOOD

AIM

To suggest ways in which those who believe in the Brotherhood of Man can put their principles into practice.

INTRODUCTION

[Refer to Lesson III and what was said about the Fatherhood of God.]

To-day let us try and see how it is impossible to believe in the Fatherhood of God without believing in the Brotherhood of Man.

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—*Putting the Principles of Brotherhood into Practice.*

Every time we stand up in church and say we believe that God is Our Father, we are acknowledging all men as our brothers. But it is no good doing this unless we put our principles into practice. When one thinks the matter over seriously one cannot help seeing how when all men do treat each other as brothers the problems with which the world is faced to-day will disappear. [Discuss the following points :

(1) There will be no more Industrial problems, for the spirit of Brotherhood between employers and employed will make strikes, sweating, profiteering, etc., impossible.

(2) There will be no more Social problems, for all will respect their Brothers' rights, and because it is always an offence against our Brother, crime will disappear, Police Courts, Prisons, Reformatories will no longer be needed.

(3) There will be no more International problems, for Brotherhood between the Nations will put an end to War.]

So long as unbrotherly behaviour goes on, so long will the world disappoint the Father's Love, and fall short of the Ideal of Him Who loves to call Himself " Our Elder Brother."

Every day we get opportunities of putting the principles of Brotherhood into practice and bringing nearer the time

" When no man seeks his own
But each another's good,
And all men live and work
In Noble Brotherhood."

Stage 2.—*The Power of Brotherly Thoughts.*

In the first place we want to be very careful to allow no thoughts which are not brotherly to stay in our minds.

Many people think thoughts don't matter, but they do.

[Discuss the following points.]

(1) *The Danger of Suspicion.*—The Prophet Zechariah says, " Let none of you imagine evil against his brother in his heart " (Zech. vii. 10). Yet someone has only to hint that a particular person is not all he should be, and we become suspicious, and our suspicion may convey itself to that person without any spoken words and dishearten him and drag him down.

Even if we know someone has done something wrong, we can help

them most by believing in their power to make good again. If we can let them feel that we believe they can climb up once more to where God meant them to be, our thoughts will be a force behind them pushing them up, and perhaps they may one day say of us,

> " Because of your strong faith I kept the track
> Whose sharp set stones my strength had well nigh spent ;
> I could not meet your eyes if I turned back,
> So on I went."

(2) *The Danger of being Over-critical.*—There is an old French Proverb which means " To understand all is to forgive all." There is a kindly criticism which is full of sympathetic understanding and can be very helpful. But hasty criticism made without any attempt to understand the other person's point of view may lead us in our thoughts to condemn others most unjustly. " There is so much good in the worst of us, and so much bad in the best of us, that it ill behoves any of us to find fault with the rest of us."

(3) *The Danger of being Unforgiving.* [See S. Matt. v. 44 ; xviii. 21.] To harbour unforgiving thoughts does harm to ourselves because it checks the growth of the Godlikeness in us, for God is Love.

It also does harm to the person we will not forgive, and affects them, though we may never know it.

Stage 3.—The Power of Brotherly Words.

We can also help our Brothers by our words.

[Discuss the following points.]

(1) *Kind Words.*—More misery is caused by unkind talk than almost anything else. Talking spitefully about people behind their backs, repeating stories which we are not quite sure are true, may cause such suffering to perfectly innocent people, that they will lose their reason or commit suicide.

[Let the class find and discuss Ps. l. 20 ; Lev. xix. 16. Quote from " Hiawatha " :

> " Storytellers, mischief-makers, found no eager ear to listen,
> Could not breed ill-will between them, for they kept each other's counsel."]

(2) *True Words.*—[Let the class find and discuss Eph. iv. 25. Help

them to see that, apart from the fact that it is wrong, to tell people a lie is to treat them in anything but a brotherly way.]

(3) *Courteous Words.*—Courtesy is due to all, and to be wanting in courtesy is to be wanting in the Spirit of Brotherhood.

Stage 4.—The Power of Brotherly Deeds.

[Discuss the following points.]

(1) *Being considerate.*—"Evil is wrought by want of thought as well as by want of heart." We want to get into the way of trying to enter into other people's feelings and treating them as we should like to be treated. [Illustrate this by showing the inconsiderateness of making slides in public thoroughfares, throwing orange peel about, etc.]

(2) *Being Helpful.*—Every day brings chances of helping others: especially we want to be ready to help the Brother who is physically, mentally, or spiritually weaker than we are. [Discuss.]

"Shoot out the brotherly hand; Show the brotherly heart; Share the brother's load."

(3) *Being Fair.*—[Show how scamping work we are paid to do, cheating or in any way benefiting ourselves at the expense of others, is the negation of Brotherhood.]

HOME STUDY

Say in what directions you think there is most need for a deepening of the Spirit of Brotherhood. Read S. Matt. xxv. 33–46.

SUMMARY

God's Family. The Brotherhood of Man.

We cannot believe in the Fatherhood of God without believing in the Brotherhood of Man. The solution of Industrial, Social, and International problems lies in the deepening of the Spirit of Brotherhood among the children of the one Father.

"Shoot out the brotherly hand; Show the brotherly heart; Share the brother's load."

XII.—GOD'S MESSENGERS. THE MEANING OF WITNESS

APPARATUS

Map of Kingdoms of Judah and Israel. Pictures illustrating the slave trade. Picture of the Crucifixion.

AIM

To show that Great Men are not afraid to stand up alone for what is right.

INTRODUCTION

All of us know how difficult it is to be called upon to do something quite by ourselves. We don't like to be the only one.

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—Great Men are not afraid to stand alone.

Being the only one is especially difficult over matters of right and wrong. If out of ten boys, nine want to do something wrong, it is very hard for the tenth not to join them.

As we look back over the past we notice that from the earliest times men have found it desperately hard to stand up alone for what was right, but that the great men of the past did it, although it was hard, because they knew that:

> "They are slaves who would not choose
> Hatred, scoffing, and abuse
> Rather than in silence shrink
> From the truth they needs must think."

[Let class supply instances of men or women whose names are honoured to-day, who in life were persecuted and abused.]

Stage 2.—Great Deeds are often accomplished by Minorities.

We notice too that many of the great deeds of the past were accomplished by the Power of God working through one man or through quite a small number.

[Discuss the tendency to ignore minorities. Let the class again supply illustrations.]

Stage 3.—Elijah.

Let us consider some occasions upon which Great Men of the Past stood up alone for what was right.

We will begin with one from the Bible and pay an imaginary visit to Palestine during the ninth century B.C.

[Show map of Kingdoms of Judah and Israel.]

Samaria is the capital of the Kingdom of Israel, and it is there the king has his palace.

The name of the king is Ahab, and he has married a heathen wife, Jezebel. Cunning and far more clever than her husband, Jezebel has persuaded him to build a temple in honour of her god, Baal, and persuaded him to join her in the worship of Baal.

Not content with this, under her orders, the Priests of Baal are busy throughout the land trying to get the people to abandon the worship of the true God.

For a long time it seems as though no one will have the courage to oppose the king and the queen. Then suddenly and dramatically there appears at the Court a solitary figure in a rough sheepskin cloak.

He has come from the Hills of Gilead beyond Jordan, and standing alone before the king he warns him with the utmost solemnity to put an end to the worship of Baal, and then, having made his protest, he disappears. At first he hopes he has done some good, and then things seem to go from bad to worse, and the loneliness of his position becomes unbearable.

His life is in danger, and he flees into the wilderness, and presently comes to a cave. There he tells God how hard it has been to be the only one, ending with the pathetic cry: "I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away" (1 Kings xix. 14). But God tells him to go back and go on being the only one. He does so, and to-day the name of Elijah is honoured as that of a great man through whom great deeds were accomplished.

Stage 4.—Wilberforce.

But let us take a more modern example, and pay an imaginary visit to the House of Commons in the year 1791. A young man, returned eleven years before as the Member for Hull, is urging the Government in an impassioned speech to put an end to the slave trade. He tells them how half the slaves in the world are owned by British subjects; he implores them to make it impossible for Britain's hands to be stained any longer by the blood of her Black Brothers, dying by hundreds from overwork and ill-treatment. At last his motion is put to the vote and lost, two out of every three present voting against it. [Show pictures.]

For sixteen years he pleads the cause of the slaves, and a Bill is passed preventing any more being sold into slavery.

For a further twenty-six years he works and another Bill is passed setting free those who were already slaves. [Discuss.]

Stage 5.—Our Blessed Lord.

Let us go back to the Bible for our last example and pay an imaginary visit to Jerusalem on the first Good Friday.

Over everything broods a darkness so intense that we can only just distinguish the Green Hill, the three Crosses, the three Figures.

Then through the darkness comes a terrible cry: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (S. Matt. xxvii. 46).

Betrayed by one friend, denied by another, deserted by the rest, the Saviour of the World is fighting His last great battle with the Powers of Evil, and He is fighting it alone. For a moment it seems that even God has forsaken Him, then the darkness clears and the last words come gently, trustfully: "Father, into Thy Hands I commend my Spirit" (S. Luke xxiii. 46. Cp. Isaiah lxiii. 3. Show Picture.]

Stage 6.—"The Father hath not left Me alone."

[Discuss the need of witnesses to-day who will stand up alone for what is right. Talk over Josh. i. 9, S. John viii. 29, and also the following lines:

"A lonely outpost in the dreary cold,
And none with whom thou mayest converse hold.
The snow and rain, and bitter wind and hail,
May fall on thee, and yet thou mayest not fail."]

HOME STUDY

Describe any man or woman who stood up alone for what was right.

SUMMARY

God's Messengers. The Meaning of Witness.

The Great Men of the Past stood up alone for what was right although it was hard.

"A lonely outpost in the dreary cold,
And none with whom thou mayest converse hold
The snow and rain, and bitter wind and hail,
May fall on thee, and yet thou mayest not fail."

XIII.—THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

"And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord, Who was Conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary"

APPARATUS

Christmas Crib or Picture of the Nativity. Model of Inn. Pictures of Church of Nativity and Bethlehem.

AIM

To help the class to see how, like the Innkeeper of Bethlehem, we each of us have opportunities of receiving Our Blessed Lord as our Guest.

INTRODUCTION

Once more Christmas has come round, and the Church is bidding us think of the Old, Old Story of the first Christmas Day. We can think of that story from the point of view of God the Father, the Holy Angels, the Blessed Virgin, S. Joseph, or the Shepherds; but to-day we will think of it from the point of view of one of whom the Bible tells us practically nothing—the Innkeeper of Bethlehem.

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—An Eastern Inn.

[Show model of Inn and discuss.]

An Eastern Inn is built around a courtyard. Arched recesses lead to bare, unfurnished rooms which travellers may hire for a few pence for the night, all being expected to provide for themselves whatever else they need.

In the middle of the courtyard is a well, where water can be obtained for the animals, and very high arches, large enough for camels to pass under, lead to the stables, which run behind the rooms. Narrow flights of steps lead on to the roof, and entrance is gained to the courtyard through heavy folding doors, and a large porch. Above the porch is often a small room with a window from which the innkeeper can watch for the arrival of travellers.

Stage 2.—The Inn at Bethlehem.

The Inn at Bethlehem must have been just such a simple building,

providing shelter from the cold night air and protection from wild animals. Yet the stable of that Inn was destined to become the most sacred spot on earth, and above the place where it once stood there stands to-day a Christian Church, parts of which were built as early as the fourth century A.D. [Show pictures and discuss.]

To that church have come thousands and thousands of Christian Pilgrims, who, kneeling on the floor of a dimly lighted chapel, have gazed with awe and wonder at a beautiful silver star let into the floor at the exact spot where it is thought the manger stood, which on that Christmas night became the Resting Place of God's own Son.

Stage 3.—*The Innkeeper of Bethlehem.*

Let us imagine we are in Bethlehem on the Eve of the first Christmas Day.

[This section is practically all narrative.]

It is a busy day for the Innkeeper. The Roman Emperor has ordered a census, and for that reason all have been ordered to return to their native town or village, and Bethlehem is rapidly filling. [Show pictures.]

Up the steep hill upon which the town is built comes one little group of travellers after another, and the Innkeeper is delighted. He is doing more business in one night than he usually does in a month.

Eagerly he stands near the entrance welcoming each fresh arrival, and at last every room is full.

The Innkeeper prepares to retire to rest, but two more travellers come. A man, no longer young, with a kind, grave face, and a woman weary and worn and in sore need of rest.

They have come far—from Nazareth, a village in Galilee—and have nowhere to go; but the Innkeeper shakes his head.

> "No room! No room! The Inn is full, yea, overfull.
> No room have we for such as ye,
> Poor folks of Galilee. Pass on! Pass on!"

But they plead for shelter, and the Innkeeper thinks of the stables, and tells them they may go there.

Stage 4.—*The First Christmas Morning.*

Having settled the difficulty, did the Innkeeper go to bed? Did he sleep while the stable of his Inn became the Birthplace of the

Saviour of the World ? Did his wife minister to the Virgin Mother in her need ? We do not know, but presently morning dawned.

Did the Innkeeper know of the visit of the Shepherds ? Did he find them kneeling in the stable before a tiny, helpless Infant but a few hours old ? It seems most probable.

Yet one wonders if they told him of the Angel's message and the Angels' Song, or if he was among those whom they felt would not understand.

But if these things were hidden from him then, no doubt he knows now, and in the land within the veil perhaps he mourns over a lost opportunity.

Stage 5.—"*His own received Him not.*"

[Discuss the danger of failing to recognize Our Blessed Lord when He comes desiring to be our Guest. Write headings on B.B.

(1) *He comes to us in the form of anyone whom we can help.* Refer to S. Matt. xxv. 40. Quote :

> "Who gives himself, with his alms feeds three,
> Himself, his hungering neighbour and Me."

(2) *He comes to us in our churches.*—If we never go there we are not making Him welcome.

(3) *He comes to us in the Blessed Sacrament.*—Upon our altars He is hidden beneath the Forms of Bread and Wine, just as on the first Christmas Day He was hidden beneath the form of a little Human Child. If we neglect our Communions it has to be said again as it was then :

"He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (S. John i. 11).]

HOME STUDY

Think out ways in which Our Blessed Lord may come to you this Christmas, and prepare to welcome Him.

SUMMARY

The Nativity of Christ.

Our Blessed Lord comes to us in many different ways asking us to receive Him as our Guest :

(1) He comes to us in the form of anyone we can help. (See S. Matt. xxv. 40).

(2) He comes to us in our churches.

(3) He comes to us in the Blessed Sacrament.

If we do not welcome Him it has to be said once more: "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (See S. John i. 11).

XIV.—THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST: (1) HIS STRENGTH

REFERENCES

"Out of the Silence" (Rhoades). [See Quotation marked with asterisk.]

APPARATUS

Christmas Crib or Picture of the Nativity used last week.

AIM

To arouse admiration for Our Blessed Lord's wonderful Strength of Character.

INTRODUCTION

[Draw attention to Crib or Picture.]

This week we have been thinking of the wonderful event commemorated here.

On the first Christmas Day God became Man, and laying aside His Glory came to earth as a little Human Child.

[Write on B.B. and discuss these words: "He became what we are, to make us what He is." Remind class of our Baptismal Profession, "to follow the example of our Saviour Christ and to be made like unto Him."]

For a few weeks we are going to think of the Character of Him Whom as Christians we are trying to imitate.

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—*Our Blessed Lord's Human Nature.*

Our Blessed Lord was Perfect Man.

[Discuss Phil. ii. 7, 8, and Heb. iv. 15.]

Because of this life was no easier for Him than it is for us; and as we look at Our Blessed Lord we see the heights which it is possible for human nature to reach, and we hear Him say:

" I came to men, in likeness of a man,
Showed thee what Manhood, merged in Godhead can." *

Stage 2.—Our Blessed Lord's Strength.

Let us begin by studying the strength of Our Blessed Lord's Character.

Many pictures and hymns are misleading, because they do not sufficiently bring out how strong and vigorous a thing His Manhood was.

[The Class to whom this lesson was given had much to say here. The general conclusion was that a large number both of pictures and hymns do not emphasize sufficiently that Our Blessed Lord's gentleness and humility were those only possible to a strong man, and so leave an impression of weakness instead of power.]

Stage 3.—Our Blessed Lord's Power over Himself. [B.B.]

As we think of Our Blessed Lord we can recall no one whose self-control was so perfect and whose courage was so undaunted.

(1) *His Self-control.*—We never hear of Our Blessed Lord being hurried or distracted even when we are told He had " No leisure so much as to eat " (S. Mark vi. 31).

We never hear of His being impatient when people disappointed Him. We never hear of His returning insult for insult, sarcasm for sarcasm, blow for blow, for His was a dignity of which none could rob Him.

[Let class suggest occasions upon which Our Blessed Lord showed His Power over Himself, e.g. by His courtesy to the friend who betrayed Him, His silence before the unjust judges, His prayer for His murderers.]

(2) *His Courage.*—We notice, too, Our Blessed Lord's wonderful Courage.

[Let the class supply instances of Our Blessed Lord's moral courage, shown by His rebuking the Religious Leaders of the day and befriending those whom the world despised.]

Our Blessed Lord possessed also superb physical courage.

[Let class supply instances. See S. Luke ix. 51.]

Stage 4.—Our Blessed Lord's Power over others. [B.B.]

Our Blessed Lord also had a marvellous power over others. We know how without any apparent effort a strong man can control a

crowd which numbers thousands and amongst whom a weaker man would be helpless.

Constantly we read of Our Blessed Lord that the multitude thronged Him (S. Mark v. 31), but always we find Him the calm, self-controlled Leader.

[Let class supply instances. See S. Matt. xiv. 22.]

It was the strength of Our Blessed Lord's Personality which attracted all kinds of people to Him.

One and all felt drawn to Him, and were prepared to give up all that they had formerly cared about in order to be with Him.

Stage 5.—*Our Blessed Lord's Power over Disease.* [B.B.]

Our Blessed Lord also had power over diseases, both of mind and body.

[It will be only possible just to touch on this difficult subject. Bring out that Our Blessed Lord was no mere Wonder Worker, as children so often think. He did not find it easy to heal people, and it seems only to have been possible when people believed in His Power to help.]

[Let class find and discuss S. Mark v. 30, vi. 5, and give instances of healing.]

Stage 6.—*Our Blessed Lord's Power over Evil.* [B.B.]

It was the same with Our Blessed Lord's Power over evil. It meant a real struggle with the Powers of Evil before He could deliver those of whom they had taken possession. His own temptations were absolutely real.

[Let class find and discuss S. Mark ix. 29.]

Stage 7.—*Our Blessed Lord's Power over Death.* [B.B.]

Death seems so strong, but Our Blessed Lord could control even death. He brought the dead to life, and He Himself only died because He chose. When His purpose was accomplished death could not hold Him. [Let class find and discuss S. John x. 18.]

Stage 8.—*Our Blessed Lord's Power over Nature.* [B.B.]

We have many instances of Our Blessed Lord's Power over Nature.

[Let class suggest. See S. Matt. viii. 26. Remind them how perfectly Our Blessed Lord would understand Nature's Laws. Suggest the need for deep reverence in connexion with Our Blessed Lord's

miracles. There is much we dare not try to understand and which we must be content not to know.]

Stage 9.—Our Blessed Lord's Power over History. [B.B.]

Lastly we realize Our Blessed Lord's Power over History.

[Let class find this foretold in S. John xii. 32.]

Withdrawn from sight, but still Perfect God and Perfect Man, Our Blessed Lord still attracts people of every race, and in Him they find all they need.

[Let class find and discuss 2 Cor. xii. 9; Phil. iv. 13.]

HOME STUDY

Think over any one instance of Our Blessed Lord showing His Power, and try and write down the thoughts which come to you.

SUMMARY

The Character of Christ: (1) *His Strength.*

We see Our Blessed Lord's strength in His

(1) Power over Himself { Self-Control. / Courage.
(2) Power over Others.
(3) Power over Disease.
(4) Power over Evil.
(5) Power over Death.
(6) Power over Nature.
(7) Power over History.

XV.—THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST: (2) HIS COURTESY

APPARATUS

Picture of Our Blessed Lord with Children.

AIM

To arouse admiration for Our Blessed Lord's Courtesy.

INTRODUCTION

Last week we began to study the Character of Our Blessed Lord. We saw how important this was, for a Christian may never rest

content until he comes, "Unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. iv. 13).

Only by turning our eyes constantly towards Our Blessed Lord can we hope to make our lives anything like His.

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—*Courtesy is the outward sign of the Spirit of Brotherhood.* [B.B.]

We have considered Our Blessed Lord's Strength. To-day let us take another side of His Character, and think of His Courtesy.

A few weeks ago we saw how impossible it is to believe in the Fatherhood of God, without believing in the Brotherhood of Man, and courtesy should be the outward sign of the Spirit of Brotherhood.

[Discuss this. It is very hard to understand the points of view of those who think that by being polite to another they lower their own dignity and acknowledge the other as their superior. One feels that their idea of courtesy is essentially different to Our Blessed Lord's, and that to accord to others little everyday acts of courtesy is to recognize them as Brothers and Sisters in the One Family.]

Stage 2.—*Courtesy is showing Consideration for Others.* [B.B.]

It has been said that courtesy is the oil which makes the "Wheels of Life" run smoothly.

The truly polite person is one who always tries to place himself in the position of another and look at things from the other's point of view, so that he may know how to behave to them, as he would like them to behave to him if he were similarly situated.

[Let class find and discuss S. Matt. vii. 12. This will mean that we shall try to avoid saying things that would hurt people or make them uncomfortable.

We shall put other people's comfort before our own and be willing to give them first turns and best places.]

The courtesy which is the result of this consideration for others is bound to be genuine, and cannot be artificial or hypocritical.

Stage 3.—*Courtesy is due to all with whom we come in contact.* [B.B.]

Another point which is quite clear is that courtesy is due not just to a few but to all with whom we come in contact. Age, position, nationality, make no difference, for the great Family to which we belong includes every member of the Human Race, and to all S. Peter says: "Be courteous" (1 S. Pet. iii. 8).

When every one carries out this injunction the world will be a much happier place and the "Wheels of Life" will not grate and jar nearly so often as they do now.

[Discuss. We shall no longer find shop assistants who are scrupulously polite to their customers and very rude and disagreeable at home, or foremen whose good manners are reserved for their employers and are never considered necessary when they are dealing with those who work under them.]

Every time we fail in courtesy, even if it is only to a little child or a beggar in the street, we fall short of the Christian Ideal, for the child and the beggar are souls for whom Christ died, and within each is the Divine Spark which demands our reverence.

Stage 4.—Courtesy day by day.

We cannot to-day think of all those with whom we meet day by day, but let us think of some to whom we are rather apt to forget that courtesy is due.

(1) *Children.*—People sometimes think that there is no need to be polite to children, but we know Our Blessed Lord did not think this.

[Show picture. Discuss how we know. Bring out that they were never afraid of Him, and they nearly always shrink from anyone who is rough.]

(2) *Women.*—[This lesson was given to boys, and the following section would need altering for girls or for a mixed class.]

There is a great deal of talk nowadays about the equality of the sexes, and one often hears it said that if women wish to be treated as men's equals, they must expect no more consideration.

But very few women claim to be physically as strong as men. They claim equality because just as there are some things men can do better than they can, so there are some things they can do better than men.

[Let class suggest. Women do all they can to give the menfolk comfortable homes and do all that we have come to look upon as women's work. In return they ask that courtesy which will bring the menfolk's superior physical strength to their aid whenever they need it. Refer to Our Blessed Lord's courtesy to women.]

It is only because they know that ninety-nine men out of one hundred would scorn to take advantage of their being physically weaker, that women in England can go about as freely as they do to-day.

[Discuss. In countries where men think no courtesy due to women, the women's lives are spent in seclusion.]

(3) *The Aged.*—Another class of people whose comfort depends very largely on our courtesy is that of the Aged.

[Discuss. We want them to forget their helplessness and never know they give trouble.]

(4) *The Infirm.*—This also applies to the infirm in mind or body.

(5) *Those in Authority.*—Courtesy to those in any position of authority when it is a sign of a willingness to make a difficult position easier, may be a great help. [Discuss. The Home, the Church, the Nation must have Leaders: Their task is not easy but those under them can make it easier.]

Stage 5.—*The Meaning of the word Courtesy.*

Courtesy, courteous, courtly, are all words which bring to our mind the picture of all the splendour of the Court of an earthly King. They also remind us that we hope to be Courtiers in the Court of the King of Kings, and that to Him and to each other we owe that courtesy which is the mark of the Christian Gentleman and the Christian Gentlewoman.

HOME STUDY

Describe your ideal of a Christian Gentleman and a Christian Gentlewoman.

SUMMARY

The Character of Christ: (2) *His Courtesy.*

Courtesy is the outward sign of the spirit of Brotherhood, and should be the outcome of that consideration for others taught us by Our Blessed Lord.

Courtesy should be shown to all with whom we come in contact.

XVI.—THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST: (3) HIS UNSELFISHNESS

AIM

To arouse admiration for the unselfishness of Christ.

INTRODUCTION

[Write on B.B.: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts xx. 35).]

These words were spoken by Our Blessed Lord and bring before us one of the most beautiful sides of His Character.

We have thought of His Strength and His Courtesy; to-day we will think of His Unselfishness.

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—The Hand outstretched to Give.

Wherever Our Blessed Lord went and with whatever people He came into contact, His was always the Hand outstretched to give.

We never hear of anyone coming to Him and receiving nothing from Him, for His was a Love that knew no limits and poured itself out upon Jew and Gentile, friend and foe, so that all were the richer for their intercourse with Him.

Yet He was a poor Man, and as far as material gifts were concerned He had little to give.

But in that fact lies a thought of great importance. The gifts which cannot be bought with money are the most valuable and these are the gifts which the very poorest of us have it in our power to bestow, so that like Our Blessed Lord we too can go through life with our hands outstretched to give.

Stage 2.—Gifts which money cannot buy.

Let us watch Our Blessed Lord moving in and out among the people amidst whom His earthly life was spent.

(1) *Time.*—One of the gifts Our Blessed Lord gave most freely was His Time. [Let a class member read aloud S. Mark vi. 31.] We are told in this verse of a time when Our Blessed Lord was in sore need of rest. He was staying in Capernaum and a constant stream of people came to him needing His help.

At last He planned to cross the lake secretly with His disciples and spend a quiet time in the desert country on the other side. But His plan was discovered, and when the boat arrived crowds of people who had hurried round the head of the lake were waiting for Him.

[Draw rough B.B. map to illustrate this. Help the class to imagine what their feelings would have been had they been in Our Blessed Lord's position. Let them tell how they think they would have acted. Read aloud S. Mark vi. 34.]

Our Blessed Lord could have sent the people away but He did not. All day long He stayed with them teaching and healing them, and before sending them away in the evening He provided them with a wonderful meal.

[Discuss how we may be unselfish in the use of our time.]

(2) *Sympathy*.—Another very precious gift which Our Blessed Lord gave to all He met was Sympathy.

[Discuss how the people who really help us are those upon whose sympathy we know we can rely and whom we feel sure will not misunderstand us.]

Those who were poor, sick, sad, despised, sinful, could come to Our Blessed Lord and feel certain that He would understand just how they were feeling, and He was equally able to enter into people's joys, hopes, and ambitions.

[Let class supply instances. See S. John xix. 27. Discuss how we may cultivate our own powers of sympathy by trying to be unselfish in our thoughts.]

(3) *Encouragement*.—Then Our Blessed Lord loved to give Encouragement. This is a very valuable gift.

Over and over again we read of someone whose whole life was changed because in Our Blessed Lord they found One Who believed in their power to become different people.

[Let class suggest. Mary Magdalene, Zacchæus, S. Matthew are striking examples. Refer to Our Blessed Lord's treatment of S. Peter. Let class compare S. Luke xxii. 61, and S. John xxi. 15-18. Discuss how we may try to help those in need of encouragement.]

(4) *Justice*.—We notice too that people could always expect from Our Blessed Lord absolute Justice. We get a wonderful example of this in the account of His trial before Pilate.

He knew that through Pilate's weakness He would be condemned to death, but He knew others were more to blame than Pilate, so He said: "He that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin" (S. John xix. 11). [Discuss how carelessness and hastily formed opinions may make us unintentionally unfair.]

(5) *Forgiveness*.—We know too how gladly Our Blessed Lord gave His Forgiveness to those who wronged Him.

[Let class supply examples. See S. Luke xxiii. 34.]

(6) *Knowledge*.—Our Blessed Lord longed to give to all a clearer Knowledge of God. This reminds us that we must not keep for ourselves alone, truths which God reveals to us.

[Discuss how we may pass on spiritual knowledge.]

(7) *Intercession.*—Another wonderful gift was Our Blessed Lord's Intercession. [Let class find and discuss S. Luke xxii. 32; S. John xvii. 11. Talk over briefly our power to help others by intercession.]

(8) *Life.*—Lastly, we know that Our Blessed Lord did not withhold the greatest of all gifts, and gladly, willingly, the Good Shepherd gave His Life for the sheep (S. John x. 15). [Discuss. Refer to those who laid down their lives for their fellow-men in the Great War.]

Stage 3.—The Cost to the Giver.

This reminds us that to be of value our gifts must cost us something. It sounds a paradox, but a great Bishop once said: "No one really knows the joy of giving until they have learnt to give until it hurts."

> "For love's strength standeth in love's sacrifice,
> And he who suffers most, has most to give."

HOME STUDY

If one found oneself becoming self-centred, what steps could one take to check this?

SUMMARY

The Character of Christ: (3) *His Unselfishness.*

Our Blessed Lord's Love knew no limits, and all with whom He came in contact received from Him such gifts as money cannot buy.

He gave freely, and at much personal self-sacrifice. If they are to be of value our gifts must cost us something.

> "For love's strength standeth in love's sacrifice,
> And he who suffers most, has most to give."

XVII.—THE IDEALS OF CHRIST: (1) IN HOME LIFE

AIM

To help the class to understand Our Blessed Lord's teaching about Marriage.[1]

[1] See Appendix (*c*).

INTRODUCTION

[Write the word " Ideal " on the B.B. and discuss.]

When we speak of anything being ideal, we mean it is the most perfect thing of its kind, and in all we do we want to have high ideals.

Our Blessed Lord says to us: " Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect " (S. Matt. v. 48).

That is His Ideal for us, and for the next few weeks we will try and see how we can live up to it. To-day we will think of our Home life.

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—*Home life.*

We are so used to the idea of having homes and belonging to families that we seldom stop to think what the world would have been like if there were no homes and no families.

If God had peopled the world by constantly creating more human beings, we should have come into the world belonging to nobody and having to find out for ourselves all that we needed to know. Instead God chose to work through what we might call the " Father and Mother " plan, sending each new child into the world, not as a stranger into a strange land, but into the loving care of two of His elder children, who had prepared together a home and a welcome.

Father, Mother, Child, united by the divine gift of a pure and holy love and belonging to each other as to no one else—that is the foundation of the home as God meant it to be.

Stage 2.—*The Responsibility of starting a New Home.*

In such a home most of us have spent the greater part of our lives. At times we may have got restless and wanted a change, but probably we have come back again feeling that,

" Be it never so humble, there's no place like Home."

But as we grow older other thoughts come and in many hearts there grows up a longing for a home of their own.

The love which makes a man and a woman want to live together and work together and make a happy home for the children God may send them, is a very wonderful thing, and far too solemn and sacred to talk lightly about.

The starting of a new home is a tremendous responsibility, and both Church and State require that before it is undertaken the man

and woman shall enter into a solemn agreement in the presence of witnesses.

Stage 3.—Civil Marriage.

[Explain briefly what is meant by Civil Marriage at a Registrar's Office. Make it clear that those who go through this ceremony are legally married according to the law of the land.]

Stage 4.—Christian Marriage.

But Marriage at a Registrar's Office is merely a way in which those who desire it may be made man and wife in the eyes of the law, and for the Christian there is a far more beautiful way of beginning a new home.

Through the Sacrament of Holy Marriage God gives His special Blessing to that Home, and His special Help to the man and woman who are entering on a new life together.

(1) *The Publication of Banns.*—Before two people can be married in church their banns must be published on three separate Sundays in the parish, or in the respective parishes in which they live.

[Discuss the reason for this. Show "Table of Kindred and Affinity." In the case of civil marriage, the names are written up on the door of the Registry Office. The prohibited degrees are the same with three exceptions, as the State allows the marriage of divorced persons, and that with a deceased wife's sister or deceased husband's brother, which the Church does not.]

(2) *The Marriage Service.*—For the Marriage Service the priest wears a white stole and stands at first by the Chancel steps with the man and woman before him.

The Service begins with an address, in which he reminds them that the starting of a new home is a very solemn thing, and tells them that as Our Blessed Lord, when He was on earth, was once present at a Marriage, so He will be present with and will bless them.

[Part of the address might be read to the class, who should find the Service in their Prayer Books.]

The Priest then asks each in turn if they are willing to do their part in building up a happy home, and tells them that they must promise each other to do this.

[Let class read the Marriage Vows.]

These are very wonderful promises, and it is terrible to think that when once made they should ever be broken.

The actual Marriage follows. The ring is placed by the man on the fourth finger of the woman's left hand. After a prayer come some more solemn words.

The Priest joins the hands of husband and wife and says: "Those whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder," and gives them God's Blessing (see S. Matt. xix. 5).

These words were first spoken by Our Blessed Lord when He was on earth and show us that nothing can ever make it right for either to marry anyone else while the other is alive—they are to be partners for life. The State allows divorce for certain reasons, but it is contrary to God's laws.

[If necessary distinguish between divorce and separation. Separation without permission to remarry may sometimes be advisable.]

Stage 5.—The Sanctity of Marriage.

The last part of the Marriage Service takes place at the Altar Rails, and a rubric says husband and wife should receive the Blessed Sacrament at the first opportunity. This further emphasizes the holiness of Marriage and Home Life.

[Talk over ways of making our homes what God wants them to be. Help the class to feel the sadness of attempts to spoil God's plan by disregarding His laws concerning marriage, and to realize the tragic plight of children born of unions God has not blessed. Try to get them to feel that the breaking of the Marriage Vow and any desecration of the sanctity of the home, are subjects too terrible to talk or read about.]

HOME STUDY

Write down what you consider essential in the making of a happy home.

SUMMARY

The Ideals of Christ: (1) *In Home Life.*

God's Blessing on a new home is given through the Sacrament of Holy Marriage.

Husband and wife promise to be true to each other till death parts them.

"Those whom God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (see S. Matt. xix. 5; S. Mark x. 9).

XVIII.—THE IDEALS OF CHRIST: (2) AN INDUSTRIAL LIFE

REFERENCES

Publications of the "Industrial Christian Fellowship."

AIM

To help the class to see how the teaching of Christ affects the various Industrial Problems of the day.

INTRODUCTION

We were thinking last week of the importance of taking as our own the standard Our Blessed Lord held up to His followers, and we saw that that standard was nothing less than perfection.

We thought then how His Ideals affected our Home Life; to-day let us see how they affect the difficulties which confront us in our Business Life.

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—*The Dignity of Labour.*

Our Blessed Lord Himself was a Worker and in an obscure village in a country no larger than Wales, nineteen hundred years ago:

> "... the Carpenter of Nazareth
> Made common things for God."

Surely this lends a dignity to all labour and shows us that we ought not to despise any kind of honest work.

Nor ought we to think one kind more honourable than another. [Discuss. Draw the following points from class:

(1) Our Blessed Lord worked with His Hands when He toiled in the Carpenter's Shop at Nazareth, and therefore we honour manual workers.

> "Who sweeps a room as by Thy Laws,
> Makes that, and the action fine."

(2) Our Blessed Lord worked with His Head during His three years Ministry, and therefore we honour brain workers. The world needs both manual workers and brain workers, and the one should respect the other.]

Stage 2.—The Need for a High Standard of Work.

As we think of Our Blessed Lord as a Worker one realizes the need for a high standard in our work.

As one looks at our great cathedrals, as one visits museums in which work done long ago is exhibited, one is conscious that the standard to-day is not so high as it once was.

[Discuss the reason for this. The class will probably refer to the introduction of machinery, and the fact that under modern conditions it is very unusual for any one article to be made by one worker. It passes through so many hands that it is difficult for any individual worker to take a pride in it. Probably some member of the class will be able to give a practical illustration of this with reference to some special article. Help them to see that though our share in making an article may be very small, the perfection of the whole depends upon the perfection of each part.]

In all that He did, Our Blessed Lord's motto seems to have been: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might" (Eccles. ix. 10).

Stage 3.—Employers and Employed.

We thought a good deal about the relationship between Employers and Employed when we were discussing Brotherhood. If Employers and Employed realize their Brotherhood in the Family of which God is the Father, all will be well.

Those who employ others will be fair and considerate. Those who work for others will try to give full value for the wages paid them, remembering that we are told to "Render therefore unto all their due" (Rom. xiii. 7).

Stage 4.—Fair Wages.

On the question of Fair Wages, Our Blessed Lord is quite clear: "The Labourer is worthy of his hire" (S. Luke x. 7).

This means that the wages paid should be in proportion to the work done, the value of this depending first on quality and secondly on quantity.

The minimum wage should be a living wage. [Discuss.]

Stage 5.—Reasonable Hours.

The number of hours for a working day is always being discussed,

but again if the principles of Brotherhood were put into practice there would be no need for fixed regulations.

[Discuss. The workers would not grudge their work, and their Employers would see that they had the necessary leisure for rest and recreation.

On at least one occasion we hear of Our Blessed Lord working a twenty-four hours' day. See S. Matt. xiv. 13-36.]

Stage 6.—The Protection of Workers.

The same thoughts apply to the protection of workers. Parliament constantly makes laws to ensure Employers taking the necessary precautions to safeguard the health and general welfare of those working for them.

But there is a law given us by Our Blessed Lord which if it were obeyed would make any other unnecessary.

[Let class find and discuss S. Matt. vii. 12.]

Stage 7.—Strikes.

[Write up on B.B. : " Is a strike the best way of settling a dispute ? " Let class discuss, expressing their opinions freely.]

In the fearful strikes which cause such distress in our country from time to time, the workers have nearly always had a grievance. But surely a strike which causes suffering to perfectly innocent people is a selfish way of trying to get a wrong righted ?

Our Blessed Lord seems to suggest a better way in S. Matt. xviii. 15. [Let class find and discuss settlement by Conferences.]

Stage 8.—Honesty.

[Discuss the common belief that an honest man cannot succeed in business.]

It can be proved that this is not true, but if it were, would it not be better to live up to Christ's Ideal at all costs and say,

" Never for me the lowered standard " ?

[Discuss how workers who find their employers use unfair methods will be lowering their standard if they do not leave as soon as possible. Let class find and discuss S. Luke vi. 38.]

HOME STUDY

Describe any difficulties you have met with through your work.

SUMMARY

The Ideals of Christ: (2) *In Industrial Life.*

If we would live up to Christ's Ideals in our Business Life, we should realize

(1) That all honest work is honourable.

(2) That we need the highest possible standard.

(3) That the principles of Brotherhood should be brought to bear on such questions as fair wages, reasonable hours, the protection of workers, strikes.

(5) That we should never acquiesce in dishonest methods.

XIX.—THE IDEALS OF CHRIST: (3) IN INTERNATIONAL LIFE

REFERENCES

Publications of the League of Nations Union. "The League of Nations and the Spiritual Ideals Implied" (Sara). "Belief in Christ" (Gore).

APPARATUS

Map of the World. Picture of the Head-quarters of the League of Nations.

AIM

To show how the teaching of Christ affects the various problems of International Life.

INTRODUCTION

We have thought how we can try and live up to Christ's Ideals in our Home Life and in our Business Life. To-day we will think about our International Life and of how Our Blessed Lord's teaching affects the relationship between one nation and another.

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—*Our Attitude towards Other Nations.*

Patriotism, the love of our own country and our own race, can be a very beautiful thing, and love for the Motherland and the bond which

exists between fellow countrymen all over the world has inspired many noble and heroic deeds. [Let class supply examples.]

But there are two kinds of patriotism, a false and a true.

[Discuss. The false patriotism is that which makes people look down upon and despise any country and any race except their own. The true patriotism is that which makes people able to appreciate the love of other nations for their country and their race, and able to give them credit for all that is good and noble in their national life.]

Stage 2.—Our Blessed Lord's Attitude towards other Nations.

Our Blessed Lord was a Jew, and so intensely did He love His own country that we are told that on one occasion He wept because of the trouble that He knew was coming upon her (S. Luke xix. 41). Yet He loved to extend help and sympathy to the people of other nations.

[Let class recall instances of this. See S. Mark vii. 24-31; S. John iv. 9-30.]

Stage 3.—Love of Our Blessed Lord should be the Bond of Union between the Nations.

We have often thought how God has given to each of us different gifts, different temperaments, and He does not mean us to be all alike.

[Discuss this. Because we are all different, each one of us has something to give to the world, and from the little we know of the future life, we feel sure we shall each have something to contribute to the joy of Heaven. Quote from "Belief in Christ": "The Fruits of all we have thought and done and suffered are gathered into the Heavenly life unseen, and one day we shall see them with our eyes."]

And as Individuals differ so Nations differ.

We feel sure that God meant each Nation to add to the world's happiness.

[Discuss with aid of map each Nation's contribution.]

S. John also tells us that each Nation will have something to add to the Glory of Heaven.

[Let class find and discuss Rev. xxi. 26. B.B.]

We feel that God Who made the Nations different cannot want them to be exactly alike in language, dress, and manner of life; yet we know He does want them to be united in a great Brotherhood in which strife and bloodshed find no place.

[Let class find and discuss Eph. i. 10.]

When Our Blessed Lord is the Central Figure upon Whom all eyes

are fixed, and to Whom every heart goes out in love, then the Nations will be united to Him and to each other in a Brotherhood that nothing can destroy. [Write on B.B. :

"O then shall dawn the Golden Days, to which true hearts are pressing,
When earth's discordant strains shall blend, the One True God confessing,
When Christly thought and Christly deed shall bind each heart and nation,
In one grand Brotherhood of Men, and one high consecration."]

Stage 4.—The League of Nations.

We have been looking at an Ideal which is not yet realized.

[Discuss with map so long as interest is maintained, such negations of the Spirit of Brotherhood as the Caste problem in India ; the Colour problem in America, and the desire for Self-aggrandizement on the part of individual nations such as led to the Great War.]

It was the desire to right these wrongs and try and put an end to war that led to the formation of the League of Nations on January 10, 1920.

[See how far the class understands the principles of arbitration. Give simple illustrations, e.g. two people quarrel and each thinks he is right. The opinion of a third person whom both can trust is asked. Help the class to see the advantages of arbitration over war ; noting especially that it is fairer because small countries are at no disadvantage ; it does not cause suffering ; it is less expensive.]

Let us think how the League works. [Discuss the following points.]

(1) *Head-quarters.*—The head-quarters of the League is a large building known as the "Palace of the Nations," at Geneva, in Switzerland. [Show picture.]

(2) *Object.*—The object of the League is to unite the Nations in a great Brotherhood so that they may get to understand each other better and settle disputes without war.

(3) *The Assembly.*—At the Head-quarters of the League a permanent staff is always at work, and so far three representatives of each country belonging have met each year at what is called the Assembly—an International Parliament.

(4) *The Council.*—In between whiles much work is done by a smaller body called the Council, which has nine members.

(5) *The Court of International Justice.*—Eleven learned judges have been chosen to deal with breaches of International Law.

(6) *Mandates.*—Provision has been made for Colonies which before the war belonged to Germany or Turkey. They are to be governed by countries chosen by the League, who are to regard them as a "sacred trust." [Cp. England's responsibility for Palestine.]

(7) *Treaties.*—No secret agreements may be made between states; all must be published by the League.

(8) *International Welfare.*—Special Committees have been appointed to deal with the questions of International Labour and Health.

All states belonging to the League promise not to go to war without first submitting their dispute to the League, and in any case not to take up arms until three months after the decision of the League.

[Refer to wars already prevented between Sweden and Finland over the Aaland Islands, and between Albania and Serbia over their respective boundaries.]

HOME STUDY

Describe the advantages of arbitration over war.

SUMMARY

The Ideals of Christ: (3) *In International Life.*

Nations, like individuals, are made different by God, and each has something to contribute to the happiness of the world and to the Glory of Heaven (see Rev. xxi. 26).

The Bond of Union between the Nations should be love of Our Blessed Lord.

"O then shall dawn the Golden Days, to which true hearts are pressing,
When earth's discordant strains shall blend, the One True God confessing,
When Christly thought and Christly deed shall bind each heart and nation,
In one grand Brotherhood of Men, and one high consecration."

XX.—THE IDEALS OF CHRIST: (4) IN CHURCH LIFE

"I BELIEVE IN . . . THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH"

AIM

To arouse in the class a desire to be loyal members of the Church of Christ.

INTRODUCTION

We have thought how we can live up to the Ideals of Christ in Home Life, in Industrial Life, and in International Life. To-day we are to think about our Church Life, and of how we may be faithful members of that great Society which was founded by Our Blessed Lord Himself.

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—*The World to which Christ came.*

[Write on B.B.: "Why did Our Blessed Lord found that great Society which we call the Church?" Discuss.]

Let us try and find an answer to this question by picturing to ourselves the world to which Christ came.

All around Him He would see the beauty of the Natural World, and we know how He loved the things of Nature and appreciated their wonder. [Let class give instances. See S. Matt. vi. 28-30.]

Sometimes we are inclined to forget that every beautiful thing in the Natural World was at one time just an Idea in the Mind of God, and that He takes the same pleasure in them as we do in anything we have worked out from ideas conceived in our minds. [This thought made a great impression upon a boy fond of designing and making electrical models.]

But though Our Blessed Lord was able to rejoice over the glory of the Natural World, many things He saw caused Him grief.

Sin and sorrow, and want and pain, all these things were enemies which had crept into the world and which were preventing its being the happy home for His children which God meant it to be, and which were preventing them from being what He wished them to be.

Stage 2.—*The World as Christ wanted it to be.*

Our Blessed Lord's earthly life was spent in continual warfare with

these enemies who had invaded God's world, and He tried to inspire His followers with a two-fold aim. They were to try each day

(1) *To become a little more like God.* [B.B. Find and discuss S. Matt. v. 48.]

(2) *To make the world a little more like Heaven.* [B.B. Find and discuss S. Matt. vi. 10. Remind class how every time we say the Lord's Prayer we ask that earth may become like Heaven.]

When the Godlikeness was perfect in them, when earth had become like Heaven, then sin and sorrow and want and pain would be no more and God's purpose would be realized.

Stage 3.—The Church's Mission to the World.

Our Blessed Lord knew that unity means strength, and so He decided to try and unite those who had this twofold aim in that great Society which we call the Church.

All who wanted to become each day a little more like God, and to make the world a little more like Heaven, were to be admitted in a special way, and as members they would have all sorts of wonderful privileges which would help them to grow in the Godlikeness.

Also, because they were no longer individuals but members of a society, they would have far greater power in their efforts to win the world.

Stage 4.—The Church's Organization.

Our Blessed Lord planned it all so carefully.

(1) *The Head.*—He Himself was to be the Head of the Church, the Leader to Whom all would look for guidance, and Who would be in closest possible touch with the members. [Let class find and discuss Eph. i. 22-23; iv. 15, 16.]

(2) *The Officers.*—Working under Our Blessed Lord were to be three Orders of Officers—Bishops, Priests, and Deacons—all of whom were to receive authority by the laying on of hands of an Officer of the highest order.

(3) *The Members.*—Members were to be admitted only through Baptism with water in the Name of the Blessed Trinity (S. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20).

(4) *The Sacraments.*—All the help the members needed in order that they might daily be growing a little more like God and helping to make the world a little more like Heaven, was to be provided for them through Seven wonderful Sacraments or Means of Grace.

[Write names on B.B., and help class to see how through the Sacraments the union of the members with their Head is strengthened and they are provided for, from the cradle to the grave. Grace is God's Help given to men, and a Sacrament is a way in which we can receive that Help.]

When Our Blessed Lord returned to Heaven, the Church was very small, but He Himself foretold that it would grow.

[See if class can remember what parable teaches this (S. Matt. xiii. 31, 32).]

The next verse contains another parable telling us how Our Blessed Lord hoped the Church's influence would spread through the world until every part was affected by it. [Let a class member read aloud verse 33.]

Stage 5.—The Future of the Church.

[Let class find and discuss Eph. v. 27.]

The realization of Our Blessed Lord's Ideal for His Church depends on the faithfulness of Individual Members.

[Discuss the following points informally.]

(1) *We must try to carry out the wishes of Our Blessed Lord, the Head of the Church.* [B.B. Discuss. Do we constantly ask: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts ix. 6).]

(2) *We must be loyal to the Clergy and help them in their Work.* [B.B. Discuss Heb. xiii. 17. Do we take a real interest in the work of the Church in our parish, our diocese, and in the Mission Field? Are we willing to take an active part? See Rev. iii. 15.]

(3) *We must use to the full the opportunities of receiving God's Help through the Sacraments.* [B.B. Discuss the widespread neglect of the Sacraments.]

HOME STUDY

Read Rev. ii. and iii. Do you think these chapters show us how the Church to-day can come nearer to Our Blessed Lord's Ideal?

SUMMARY

The Ideals of Christ: (4) *In Church Life.*

Because we are Members of the Church we are pledged to try

(1) To become each day a little more like God (S. Matt. v. 48).

(2) To make the world a little more like Heaven (S. Matt. vi. 10)

If we would be faithful members we must try

(1) To carry out the wishes of Our Blessed Lord, the Head of the Church.

(2) To be loyal to the Clergy and help them in their work.

(3) To use to the full the opportunities of receiving God's Help through the Sacraments.

XXI.—THE IDEALS OF CHRIST: (5) IN FRIENDSHIP

AIM

To help the class to realize the responsibility of Friendship.

INTRODUCTION

We were thinking recently how it is one of God's plans that we should not come into the world as strangers into a strange land, but that we should come to a home prepared and made ready by two of God's Elder Children. To-day we will think of the friendships we make outside our home.

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—*What is Friendship?*

When we make another person our friend, it is usually because we find something in him which appeals to us. [Discuss.]

Our spirit, that is our real self, is able to get into touch with his spirit, and a link is formed between us which unites us in a special way.

Because of that link each can enter into the thoughts and feelings of the other, and whatever one does affects the other directly or indirectly.

Through that link something is always passing, and each Friend is constantly giving to, or receiving from, the other. And God meant us to have friends who would be linked to us in this special way. He said: "It is not good for the Man to be alone" (Gen. ii. 18).

[Discuss. We are all of us different and can learn much from each other. We all of us have our weak points and our strong ones. Where we are weak another may be able to help us, and where we are strong we may be able to help another.

Let the class find Gal. vi. 2. Remind them that

"Burdens shared are light to carry."]

Stage 2.—The Characteristics of a true Friendship.

Let us think how we may know a true Friendship.

(1) *Unselfishness.* [B.B.] A true friend is one who always puts his friend's interests before his own and who thinks far more of what he can give to him than of what he ever get from him. He is far more anxious that his friend should be successful in any undertaking than that he himself should succeed. [Discuss this with reference to jealousy.]

(2) *Confidence.* [B.B.] A friendship cannot exist between two people unless there is complete confidence between them, for want of trust on either side soon ends a friendship.

[Discuss how careful we should be never to let ourselves think badly of another without a cause, and never carelessly to sow distrust between friends.]

(3) *Loyalty.* [B.B.] A real friend is always loyal. He is prepared to stand by his friend through thick and thin, so long as he can do so without going against his conscience.

[Discuss. This last point is a very vital one and presents many problems, particularly with boys. Some argued that nothing would induce them to let a "Pal" down. Others seemed able to grasp the idea that to uphold a friend in wrong-doing was to take his side against God, and so was disloyal to one's best Friend. Read aloud Ps. xli. 9, and refer to the feeling of horror with which we recall the kiss of Judas.]

(4) *Mutual Respect.* [B.B.] Lastly, in the best kind of friendship there is always mutual respect—the respect of the one for the other. There is an old Hindu legend which has much to teach us about this.

The legend says that long, long ago, at the beginning of time, the gods were troubled because man claimed that he himself was in some sense divine, that he was related to the gods. They considered the matter and were forced to acknowledge that man's claim was just.

But, disliking the idea of man being in any way related to them, they came by stealth and stole away his Godhead, intending to hide it where he should never find it.

But when they had stolen it they were puzzled as to where they should hide it. If it were anywhere on earth they felt sure that men would discover it; if they hid it among themselves they feared that in his eagerness man would force his way up even to the skies.

Then the wisest of all the gods said: "Give it to me. I will hide

it where man will never think of looking for it. I will put it inside man himself.

That old, old legend foreshadows a great truth. [Let class find 1 Cor. iii. 16.] Because each human being enshrines something divine we cannot insult them without insulting God.

Stage 3.—The Responsibility of Friendship.

[Discuss the responsibility friendship entails, especially to the person with strength of character. Our influence over others is a power which can be used for God or the devil. Suggest that the only safeguard is to live so close to Our Blessed Lord that the influence is not ours but His.]

Stage 4.—Friendship with those of the other Sex.[1]

[This section would need altering if the class is not confined to boys.]

In conclusion, let us think of our friendships with those of the other sex, and see how we can keep them clean and beautiful.

[Discuss the following points informally. Amplify where necessary.]

(1) In the choice of a girl friend one wants to remember that the girl who makes herself cheap and whose friendship is to be had for the asking is not worth knowing. It may be more difficult to get to know the quieter kind of girl, but hers is the only friendship of real value.

(2) When one has found a girl friend one wants to remember that it is only the wrong kind of girl who likes her men friends to be rough and familiar.

(3) In spite of the changing conditions and altered position of women, there are still times when women need the protection of their men friends.

A man worthy of the name will refuse to take advantage of a girl who in ignorance does things which make people think badly of her, and he will never add to the degradation of a woman whose womanhood is not the clean and glorious thing God meant it to be.

HOME STUDY

Find instances of Friendship in the Bible.

[1] See Appendix (*c*).

SUMMARY

The Ideals of Christ: (5) *In Friendship.*

In a true friendship there will always be

(1) Unselfishness. Each will put the other's interests before his own.

(2) Confidence. Each will trust the other.

(3) Loyalty. Each will stand by the other so long as they can do so without being disloyal to their Best Friend.

(4) Mutual Respect. Each will recognize and reverence the divine within the other.

XXII.—THE IDEALS OF CHRIST: (6) IN RECREATION

REFERENCES

"The Legend of the Radiant Monk" (Fiaux).

AIM

To suggest ways in which we can try and live up to the Ideals of Christ in our Recreation.

INTRODUCTION

Sometimes one comes across people who think that to be a true follower of Christ is to be a very sad, gloomy sort of person. To-day we will think how Our Blessed Lord wants us to be happy and of how we may still live up to His Ideals in the time we set apart for recreation.

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—*What Our Blessed Lord said about Happiness.*

There were people in the time of Our Blessed Lord who thought that others would think them good if they always wore very long, sad faces.

But Our Blessed Lord did not at all approve of this.

[Let the class find and discuss S. Matt. vi. 16, 23; S. John xvi. 22.]

He told His followers that, though they would have trials and difficulties to face, they ought to be the happiest people in the world.

[Discuss. A Christian enjoys the companionship of Him in Whose Presence is the "Fulness of Joy" (Ps. xvi. 11).]

It is therefore quite true to say that

"A gloomy Christian is a paradox."

Stage 2.—The Legend of the Radiant Monk.

There is a legend which tells how, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, there lived a young man named Don Quirido. He had a great trouble, and finally he went into a monastery, where, after a time, he found the joy which comes to every true Follower of Christ.

The result was, that he was constantly getting into trouble with the Abbot for disturbing the quiet of the monastery by singing at his work.

His happiness was so infectious that the other monks became brighter too, and at last the Abbot could stand it no longer. Don Quirido's work was always done perfectly, and there was no doubt that he was very much in earnest, but he was too light-hearted, and the Abbot made an excuse to send him to another monastery.

Just the same thing happened there, and the Abbot of this monastery reported the matter to the authorities of the Church, and Don Quirido was condemned to be burnt at the stake in the presence of the other monks. As he stood bound, with the flames leaping up round him, his face was transfigured with joy, and he sang louder than ever.

The watching monks became so excited that they tried to rush into the flames. Some were held back, but twelve perished with him.

After this, the legend tells, God revealed to the one responsible for their death that their lives were more pleasing to Him than his was.

Stage 3.—What we mean by Recreation.

[Discuss the meaning of the word recreation. Recreation is meant to re-create or revive the powers of mind and body.]

Some kinds of recreation refresh our minds.

[Let class suggest. Music, Art, Reading, etc.]

Other kinds of recreation refresh our bodies.

[Let class suggest, and name their favourite sports.]

Stage 4.—The Place of Recreation in our Lives.

How much time we can rightly give to recreation is a question each has to decide for himself. [Discuss the following points.]

(1) *Recreation must not be allowed to interfere with our duty to God.* [B.B. Give simple illustrations, e.g. there may be no harm in staying up late at the pictures on Saturday night, so long as it does not make us too tired to get up for our Communion on Sunday morning, or unable to collect our thoughts. The class to whom this lesson was

given disapproved so strongly of Sunday Games that these were scarcely referred to. In many classes a discussion on that subject might be introduced here.]

(2) *Recreation must not be allowed to interfere with our duty to our neighbour.* [B.B.] Give simple illustrations, e.g. there may be no harm in going to a particular whist drive or concert, so long as there is no one needing our help at home. It might be pointed out that Sunday Games and Sunday Entertaining often make us forget our duty to our neighbour, by causing extra work.]

Stage 5.—A Christian's Recreation.

In deciding what kinds of recreation are possible to a Christian there are several tests we can apply.

(1) *A Christian's Recreation must not be at the expense of another.* [B.B.]

On Christmas Eve in the year 408, a Christian monk named Telemachus was stoned to death in the Colosseum at Rome because he attempted to put an end to one of the terrible fights in which two gladiators fought till one was dead.

But afterwards people saw he was right, and the fights were stopped. No true Christian will want to enjoy himself at the expense of suffering caused to men or animals.

[Discuss. A member of the class to whom this lesson was first given introduced a discussion on the methods used in training performing animals. Another brought up stag hunting.]

(2) *A Christian's Recreation must be such as he can ask Our Blessed Lord to share.* [B.B.]

It is said that long ago a saint was taking part in some kind of sport. A passer-by was shocked, and said to him, " I should like to know what you would do if you knew Our Blessed Lord was about to appear on earth again." It is said that the saint replied, " I should try and win this game."

He was not doing anything of which he was ashamed. [Discuss. Books, Plays, Pictures which make light of sin, and scoff at holy things ; sport where there is cheating, underhand dealing, betting, or gambling—these are what a Christian will avoid.]

HOME STUDY

Describe a form of recreation which you think is right for a Christian, and one which you think is wrong, giving reasons.

SUMMARY

The Ideals of Christ: (6) *In Recreation.*

In deciding what time a Christian can give to recreation and what kinds of amusement he can take part in, we must remember that

(1) Recreation must not be allowed to interfere with our duty to God.

(2) Recreation must not be allowed to interfere with our duty to our neighbour.

(3) A Christian's recreation must not be at the expense of another.

(4) A Christian's recreation must be such as he can ask Our Blessed Lord to share.

XXIII.—THE MORAL STANDARD OF CHRIST

AIM

To show how those who accept Our Blessed Lord's moral standard must be prepared to meet with opposition.

INTRODUCTION

[Have the following lines written up on B.B. :—

"Not once or twice in our fair Island Story
The Path of Duty was the way to Glory:
He who ever following her commands,
On with toil of heart, and knees, and hands,
Through the long gorge to the far light, has won
His path upward and prevailed,
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled
Are close upon the shining table-lands,
Of which our God Himself is moon and sun."

Discuss. As followers of our Blessed Lord it is our duty to try and carry out His Teaching, and the higher we climb towards His Ideal the nearer we shall be to Him.]

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—*The Moral Standard of Christ.*

[Remind the class once more of the high Ideal Our Blessed Lord sets before us in S. Matt. v. 48.]

It is much better to aim at an Ideal we cannot reach than to be contented with a low one.

> "Who aimeth at the sky
> Shoots higher much than him who means a tree."

Yet over and over again one comes across people who, because they cannot reach Our Blessed Lord's standard, give up trying to.

Instead of comparing their lives with His they are quite content if they can tell us they are no worse than their neighbours.

Sometimes a person to whom some wrong-doing has been pointed out excuses himself by saying that he was not the only one, and does not seem to realize that that makes it infinitely worse.

Every time we do what is wrong, we hurt God, and each one who joins in some misdeed is adding to His Sorrow, and wounding His Love afresh.

[Discuss. Talk over the danger of having a low standard.]

Stage 2.—Opposition in the First Century.

When Our Blessed Lord was on earth, He constantly aroused opposition because He taught people that they must never be content until they had reached perfection.

The Jewish Leaders believed, and taught the people to believe, that if they observed strictly the letter of the Law, they had done all that was required of them; but Our Blessed Lord demanded more.

[Let class find and discuss S. Luke xvii. 10; also S. Matt. v. 20.]

This plain speaking aroused bitter feelings in the hearts of the Jewish Leaders, for it made them feel uncomfortable and they did not like being made to feel uncomfortable. So they grew to hate Our Blessed Lord, and that hatred increased until they began to plot His death.

[Discuss how the world to-day persecutes those who stand up alone for what is right.]

We know how it ended. After bribing one of His followers to betray Him, they arrested Him, and because there was no crime of which they could accuse Him, "they sought false witnesses against Jesus, to put Him to death" (S. Matt. xxvi. 59).

Secretly during the night they tried Him, and passed the death sentence.

"Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil

hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved (S. John iii. 19, 20).

Stage 3.—Opposition in the Twentieth Century.

[Discuss the refusal of the world to-day to accept unquestioningly the Moral Standard of Christ.]

If we accept Our Blessed Lord's standard,

(1) *We must keep not only the letter of the Ten Commandments but the Spirit.* Our Blessed Lord shows us that

We break the First Commandment if we love any person or any thing more than God. [Discuss how money, pleasure, friends may all become our gods.]

We break the Second Commandment not only by worshipping God in wrong ways, but by not worshipping Him at all. [Discuss how large our churches would have to be if all kept this Commandment.]

We break the Third Commandment not only by swearing, but by any want of reverence when we are speaking to or about God, or when we are in His House. [Discuss.]

We break the Fourth Commandment by not giving God a due proportion of our time. [Discuss.]

We break the Fifth Commandment if we do not consider and help all who are in any position of authority. [Discuss.]

We break the Sixth Commandment by any unloving thoughts, words, and deeds. [Discuss.]

We break the Seventh Commandment when we yield to any temptation to impurity.

We break the Eighth Commandment by any kind of unfairness or dishonesty. [Discuss.]

We break the Ninth Commandment by unkind talk and gossip. [Discuss.]

We break the Tenth Commandment by grumbling and being discontented. [Discuss.]

(2) *We must never wilfully neglect anything Our Blessed Lord told His followers to do.*

[Let the class find special commands in S. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; S. John xv. 12, vi. 53, referring to the need for greater efforts for the extension of the kingdom; for a deepening of the spirit of love; and for a more widespread use of the Blessed Sacrament.]

HOME STUDY

Take one of the Ten Commandments and show how Our Blessed Lord explained the meaning.

SUMMARY

The Moral Standard of Christ.

When Our Blessed Lord was on earth the moral standard He held up to His followers was that of perfection.

[Beneath this let the class copy the lines given in the Introduction.]

XXIV.—CHRIST'S GIFTS: (1) IN HOLY BAPTISM

AIM

To help the class to value more deeply the privileges which became theirs in Holy Baptism.

INTRODUCTION

[Write up on B.B., "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv. 13).]

These words were said by a Christian nearly two thousand years ago, but they can be said by every Christian to-day.

Our Blessed Lord never asks the impossible, and He offers to each of us the power to become what He wants us to be.

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—The Wonder of the Sacraments.

But that power does not come to us without our taking any trouble to get it, and we have no right to expect everything to be done for us, if we make no effort to help ourselves.

[Discuss the old saying that "God helps those who help themselves."]

Because He has lived on earth as Man, Our Blessed Lord knows just the kind of help we need at different times in our lives, and He has planned that we shall always be able to have it.

The chief way in which His Help is given is through the Sacraments.

[Write up the names of the Seven Sacraments on the B.B.]

Through each of these Sacraments Our Blessed Lord offers us a special Gift to meet a special need:

But His Help is far too precious and wonderful a thing to be wasted, and so He has planned that it shall be given only to those who show they are in earnest by being ready to take some definite step in order to get it.

[Let class find and discuss S. Matt. vii. 6.]

The Gift in each case is something we cannot see, given through an outward sign which we can see.

It is as though Our Blessed Lord stands there with the Gift in His Hand, and our part is to go to Him, stretch out our hand, and take it.

Stage 2.—The Gift in Holy Baptism.

Let us think of the Gift that is offered us in Holy Baptism. There can be no doubt that that is a Gift which Our Blessed Lord meant us to have as soon as ever we came into this world.

[If necessary give reasons for Infant Baptism. Refer to S. Mark x. 13, 14, and the baptizing of whole households by the Apostles (see Acts xvi. 33).]

Perhaps we wonder what the soul of a little child can need so early in life.

For every human being born into this world God has a plan. Within each is that tiny spark of the Divine, and God wants each one brought so close to Him, that that tiny spark is brought into contact with its source. So each life is united to Him.

That is what happens in Holy Baptism. When a person is baptized in the Name of the Holy Trinity, Our Blessed Lord promises that the Holy Spirit will wash away anything which prevents his being quite close to God.

[Apply this to the case of a little child. A little child has committed no actual sin, but, because he is born of parents who have sinned, his union with God is not so perfect as it would have been had there been no sin. In the case of an adult, Baptism cleanses from actual sin (see Is. lix. 2). Discuss the symbolism of water as the outward sign.]

At Baptism the Divine Spark within us was united to God, and we entered on that journey which should lead us nearer and nearer to that state of perfect union with Him which is Heaven.

It is all so intensely wonderful, and yet people sometimes treat Baptism as though it were quite an ordinary event.

[Discuss. Parents sometimes speak of it as a necessary form to be gone through, similar to registration.

For quite trivial reasons they will sometimes delay a child's Baptism. They will make a great deal of their children's birthdays, and perhaps do not even remember the date of their Baptism.]

Stage 3.—The Baptism Services.

[Let class take their Prayer Books and notice the three Baptism Services, and the occasions for their use.]

(1) *Public Baptism of Infants.* [Let class discover from the Rubrics (*a*) The reason why Baptism should if possible take place on a Sunday or Holy Day.

(*b*) The number of godparents required for boys and girls respectively.

(*c*) The suggested time for Baptisms.

[Discuss all these points with the class.]

(2) *Private Baptism of Infants.*—[Discuss the need for having children baptized as soon as possible. Explain how in emergencies, when it is thought that a child is dying and no clergyman can be procured, a lay person may baptize a child. Tell class exactly how to act in such circumstances, and explain the two essentials—the use of water and the Name of the Blessed Trinity—letting them find the questions asked by the priest, if a child so baptized lives and is brought to be received into the Church. Refer also to Conditional Baptism in cases of uncertainty, and quote the formula used.]

(3) *Baptism of those of Riper Years.*—[Explain that in the case of adults old enough to make the promises for themselves, a definite course of instruction should ordinarily precede Baptism, Confirmation following immediately.]

Stage 4.—The Baptismal Covenant.

We have thought of the mystical side of Baptism, because that is the side least understood, but there is a very practical side too.

[Discuss the three privileges received, and the three promises made. Show how we are pledged

(1) To resist all the devil's attempts to lure us away from God.

(2) To trust ourselves absolutely to God's loving care.

(3) To try in all things to do what He would have us do.]

HOME STUDY

Describe what you would do if an unbaptized child was taken suddenly ill and you could not get a clergyman.

SUMMARY

Christ's Gifts: (1) *In Holy Baptism.*

In the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

(1) The outward sign is water, used in the Name of the Blessed Trinity.

(2) The Gift given through the outward sign, is the washing away of all that hinders the soul's union with God. The Spark of the Divine within us is united to God, and we enter on that journey which should end in the perfect union with Him which is Heaven.

XXV.—CHRIST'S GIFTS: (2) IN CONFIRMATION

APPARATUS

Pictures of the Betrayal, the Disciples receiving the Gift of the Holy Spirit, S. Peter preaching on the Day of Pentecost.

AIM

To help the class to value the Confirmation Gift.

INTRODUCTION

[Put up again a list of the Seven Sacraments.]

To-day we are to think of the Gift Our Blessed Lord offers us through Confirmation.

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—*What does the word Confirmation mean?* [B.B.]

The word Confirmation means strengthening, and the Gift Our Blessed Lord offers us in Confirmation is the strength, or the power, to come up to His Ideal for us.

We will look at three pictures which make this clear.

[Pin picture of the Betrayal on left-hand side of board. Discuss. This picture shows us Our Blessed Lord in the midst of His enemies in sore need of sympathy and help. Where were His friends?

Let class find S. Matt. xxvi. 56. They were faithful to Him when it was easy; directly it was hard they failed Him.]

But let us look at our next picture.

[Pin picture of S. Peter preaching on the Day of Pentecost, well to the right of the board, leaving room for the third between them.

Discuss. In the first picture we saw the disciples overcome by cowardice, deserting Our Blessed Lord in the hour of His need. In this one we see one of them, but a few weeks later, standing up boldly before a great crowd of people, and fearlessly proclaiming himself His follower.]

Our third picture will show us what had brought about the change.

[Pin the picture of the Disciples receiving the Gift of the Holy Spirit in between the other two. In between the events recorded in the picture which shows us the disciples' weakness, and that depicted in the one which shows us their strength, something had happened. Our Blessed Lord had sent the Holy Spirit to them with that same Gift of Strength which He offers to us in Confirmation. Our third picture shows us what happened on their Confirmation Day. Let class read Acts ii. 1–4.]

Because it was the very first Confirmation, the giving of the Gift was accompanied by wonderful happenings—the sound of a great wind, the vision of tongues of flame, the speaking with other tongues. These passed, but the Gift remained. We do not see these things at a Confirmation to-day, but the Gift is the same.

"Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts i. 8), Our Blessed Lord promised His disciples; and S. Peter says, "The promise is unto you and to your children and to all that are afar off" (Acts ii. 39).

As the first Bishops of the Church, the Apostles received from Our Blessed Lord the authority to bestow on others the Gift that they had received, by the Laying on of Hands. This authority has been passed on to their successors, the Bishops of to-day. [Discuss.]

Stage 2.—What does the Bible say about Confirmation? [B.B.]

[Discuss the following points. Let class look up selected references:

(1) Our Blessed Lord taught His followers about Confirmation (Heb. vi. 2).

(2) In early days every baptized person was confirmed (Acts viii. 14–17; xix. 1–6).

(3) Through Confirmation the Holy Spirit comes to make our hearts His home, and give us spiritual power (S. John xiv. 16, 26, xv. 26, xvi. 7; Acts i. 8, viii. 15, x. 47, xv. 8, xix. 2).

(4) This Indwelling of the Holy Spirit is a greater help than the visible Presence of Our Blessed Lord would have been (S. John xvi. 7).]

Stage 3.—*Why should we be Confirmed?* [B.B.]

[Discuss the following points]

(1) In Confirmation Our Blessed Lord offers us strength. To refuse what He offers is an insult to Him, and to go into the Battle of Life without the strength offered us in Confirmation, is as foolish as it would be for a soldier to go unarmed into the thickest part of the fight.

(2) When we were baptized the priest said to those who brought us, "Ye are to take care that this child be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him." It is disloyal to the Church to disobey her rules.

(3) Our Blessed Lord's dying command was that we should come to Holy Communion. Out of the depth of His Love He has promised His Presence beneath the outward forms of Bread and Wine. He says to us "Come unto Me" (S. Matt. xi. 28); are we going to wound His Love by being among those of whom He has to say, "Ye would not"? (S. Luke xiii. 34.)

[Explain how though Confirmation is ordinarily the gateway to Communion, in special circumstances exceptions are made.]

(4) Confirmation is an opportunity of standing out before the world as followers of Our Blessed Lord.

Stage 4.—*How is it that many good people have not been Confirmed?* [B.B.]

Every one has not had the same opportunity of learning the true meaning of Confirmation.

[Discuss. When people have not been confirmed because they did not understand what Confirmation was, we feel sure God finds other ways of helping them.]

It is the people who wilfully neglect Confirmation who run such a grave risk. Incidentally, we need to remember that Our Blessed Lord did not tell us to be content if we were as good as even the best of our neighbours.

Stage 5.—*How is it that there are many bad people who have been Confirmed?* [B.B.]

[Discuss. If someone gives us a five-pound note we have the power to do certain things we could not do before, but we need not use it. We can destroy the note, or dig a hole and bury it, and we shall be no better off.]

So it is with the Gift that becomes ours in Confirmation.

It is not a charm, and unless we use it we shall be none the better for having had it, but the fault will lie, not with the Gift, but with ourselves.

HOME STUDY

Write down any objections to Confirmation which you have heard, and say how you tried to answer them.

SUMMARY

Christ's Gifts: (2) *In Confirmation.*

In Confirmation the outward sign is the laying on of a Bishop's hands.

The word Confirmation means strengthening, and through the outward sign we receive the Holy Spirit into our hearts to strengthen us for the Battle of Life.

References: S. John xiv. 16, 26, xv. 26, xvi. 7; Acts i. 8, viii. 15, x. 47, xv. 8, xix. 2–6; Heb. vi. 2.

XXVI.—CHRIST'S GIFTS: (3) IN HOLY COMMUNION

APPARATUS

Pictures of the Last Supper, and the "Place of Meeting." Model Tabernacle.

AIM

To deepen the love and reverence of the class for the Blessed Sacrament.

INTRODUCTION

[Hang up the list of the names of the Seven Sacraments used in former lessons.]

We have thought of the Gifts offered us in Baptism and Confirmation; to-day we will think of the Gift offered us through Holy Communion, which, because it is the most wonderful of all, is sometimes called the "Blessed Sacrament."

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—The Soul's desire for Communion with God.

God wishes to be our Friend, and wishes us to be His, and He has always made it possible for His people to come into closest possible touch with Him.

Stage 2.—The Presence Chamber in Old Testament Times.

In Old Testament times, to the Jew the most sacred spot on earth was that where God had promised His special Presence.

Within the Tabernacle, and in later days within the Temple, was that tiny dark room which was called the Holy of Holies.

[Show model and explain. Let class find in Ex. xxv. 22 the promise of the Presence above the Mercy Seat.]

Every morning and every evening, after the offering of the Daily Sacrifice, the Priest stood before the curtain which separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place, praying for himself and the people, knowing he was very near to God.

Without, with their eyes turned towards that same spot, the people also prayed, conscious of God's nearness.

So great was the reverence of the Jews for the Holy of Holies, that it was never entered except by the High-Priest once a year on the Day of Atonement.

Stage 3.—The Presence Chamber in New Testament Times.

The years passed by, and in the fullness of time something surpassingly wonderful came about.

On the first Christmas Day God became man and came to dwell among His people as one of themselves.

All did not recognize Him, but the few who did, learnt to value His Friendship more than anything else on earth.

But Our Blessed Lord knew that He could not always remain on earth in visible form, and that the time would come when His friends would no longer be able to see Him amongst them. But He did not mean to leave them without any means of getting close to Him.

Quite clearly He told them that He was going to make it possible for them to come nearer to Him than ever before, and that the new plan would provide a Meeting Place between Him and His friends, through all the ages that were coming, until the day when they would once more see Him face to face.

On the night before His death Our Blessed Lord explained His plan, and promised that whenever one of the Ministers of His Church took a little ordinary Bread and Wine and blessed it in a special way, He would come and hide Himself behind those outward signs.

Stage 4.—*The Blessed Sacrament and our Needs.*

It was such a simple plan, yet it was just what was needed by the first Christians, and by Christians all through the ages. Without the Blessed Sacrament they might have been

(1) *Weak.* [Discuss.] Our Blessed Lord promised that when in Holy Communion they received the Holy Food, He would feed their souls with His Own Life and make them strong.

[Let a class member read aloud S. John vi. 52–56.]

(2) *Lonely.* [Discuss.] Our Blessed Lord promised that the Blessed Sacrament should be the Meeting Place between Him and His people until they were able to enjoy the full Glory of His unveiled Presence. [Refer again to S. John vi. 56.]

(3) *Forgetful.* [Discuss.] Our Blessed Lord wanted Holy Communion to be in a very special way a Memorial Service. He said, "This do in remembrance of Me" (S. Luke xxii. 19).

The Bread and the Wine were to remind them of His Body bruised and torn, and His Blood shed for them upon the Cross.

[Discuss how the Blessed Sacrament was Our Blessed Lord's dying Gift to His Church, and how it was His dying wish that we should use that Gift.]

Stage 5.—*The Blessed Sacrament in the Church's History.*

As we look back over the history of the Church, it is wonderful to think of all the hundreds and thousands of Christians who have found the greatest joy and help in the Blessed Sacrament.

(1) *In the Days of the Apostles.* [Discuss Acts ii. 42–46.]—In the Days of the Apostles, Holy Communion was celebrated every day when possible, and always on the First Day of the Week.

(2) *In the Days of Persecution.*—Later, in times of persecution, the Blessed Sacrament was celebrated in the Catacombs, and other secret places. [Discuss.]

(3) *In the Middle Ages.*—When persecution ceased and churches were built everywhere, the Altar was always given the chief place, and the largest congregations and most beautiful music were always to be found at the Blessed Sacrament.

(4) *To-day.*—To-day those of us who have learnt the secret, know that the most wonderful moments in our lives are those when we find Our Blessed Lord, true to His promise, in this Sacrament of His Love.

[Discuss the different conditions under which the Blessed Sacrament is sometimes celebrated, e.g. in a sick person's room, on board a ship, on the battle-field, in some gorgeous cathedral, in a simple mission church. Help the class to see that the surroundings are immaterial, for the Words of Consecration make any place the Palace of the King of Kings, the Altar His Throne, and the Bread and Wine just veils which hide Him from us.]

HOME STUDY

Describe any celebration of Holy Communion which you have heard of in unusual circumstances.

SUMMARY

Christ's Gifts: (3) *In Holy Communion.*

Holy Communion is the appointed Meeting Place between Our Blessed Lord and His followers.

When the Priest blesses the Bread and Wine, Our Blessed Lord comes and hides Himself behind Them, so that the Church becomes His Palace, and the Altar His Throne.

XXVII.—CHRIST'S GIFTS: (4) IN ABSOLUTION

"I BELIEVE IN . . . THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS"

APPARATUS

Picture of the Prodigal Son.

AIM

To help the class to understand the meaning of Repentance, Confesssion, and Absolution.

INTRODUCTION

[With list of the Seven Sacraments remind class of those they have already thought of.]

To-day we will think of the Gift Our Blessed Lord offers us through Absolution.

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—*How Sin hurts ourselves.*

Let us begin by thinking about the real meaning of sin. Constantly during the past year we have reminded ourselves how Our Blessed Lord showed us by His Life and by His Teaching what He wanted us to be and to do.

He is the Hero Whom we want to spend our lives in trying to imitate.

The word Christian means "Follower of Christ," and every true Christian is one who is trying to become like Him.

This helps us to understand what sin is.

Sin is failure to be what Our Blessed Lord wants us to be; to sin is, as S. Paul reminds us, to

"Come short of the Glory of God," to become less like Him, instead of more like Him. [Let class find and discuss Rom. iii. 23.]

Stage 2.—*How Sin hurts our Fellow-men.*

In the same Epistle, S. Paul gives us another very solemn thought. He tells us that every time we fail, we hurt not only ourselves, but our fellow-men.

[Let class turn to Rom. xiv. 7, and discuss. Try to help them to see that though this fact is true in the widest sense, it applies in a very special way to members of the Holy Catholic Church. So close is the bond of union between them, that S. Paul tells us, "Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it" (see 1 Cor. xii. 26). Discuss the solemnity of this thought. Let the class find S. John xvii. 19.]

The more the Christlikeness radiates from us, the better and brighter the world will be.

The more often we fail, the more difficult we make it for our fellow-men.

Stage 3.—*How Sin hurts God.*

More terrible still is the thought that sin hurts not only ourselves and our fellow-men, but it also hurts God.

[Discuss how we ourselves are hurt by the failure of one we love.]

Because Our Blessed Lord cares for us more than we can ever care for each other, when we fail to be what He wants us to be, He suffers more than we can ever suffer.

So bitter is His disappointment that the Writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us, that He bears again the pain of crucifixion.

[Let class find and discuss Heb. vi. 6.]

Stage 4.—Repentance.

But of course there will come times when we know we have failed, hurting ourselves, our fellow-men, and God.

What is to be done then ?

As Our Blessed Lord knows and provides for all our other needs, so He knows and provides for this one.

However much we hurt Him He never loves us less.

[See if class can suggest a parable which teaches this. Show picture of the Prodigal Son.]

Whenever we want to get rid of all that is spoiling His Likeness in us, Our Blessed Lord makes it possible for us to do so, if we will fulfil three conditions.

We must be really sorry for what we have done wrong, not because of any consequences to ourselves, but because we have wounded the Love of God. We call this Contrition. [B.B. Most likely a discussion will arise here as to how we can produce in ourselves feelings of contrition. Help the class to see that a real desire to feel sorry is a big step in the right direction. Suggest that to kneel before a Crucifix and pray these words helps many :

"O make me feel it was my sin
As though no other sins there were,
That was to Him Who bears the world
A load that He could scarcely bear."]

When we are really sorry for what we have done then the next two steps will come quite naturally.

We shall tell God all we have done wrong. We call this confession. [B.B.]

We shall try to do better. We call this amendment. [B.B.]

When we have climbed these three steps, all the past is forgiven, and there is nothing between the Soul and God.

Stage 5.—Absolution.

[Discuss the difficulty some find in feeling God has forgiven them.]

Sin is an offence against God, and only God can forgive it, but in His loving thoughtfulness for us Our Blessed Lord planned that all

who wished might hear the Message of His Forgiveness pronounced by His Priest. This power was first given by Our Blessed Lord to His Apostles.

[Let the class find S. John xx. 22, 23. Read aloud.]

These words are repeated by the Bishop to every Priest he ordains.

[Let the class find them in the Service for the Ordination of Priests.

Let them find in the Morning and Evening, and in the Communion Services, occasions when a Priest uses this power publicly. Then show them the passages in the first long Exhortation in the Communion Service, and the Visitation Service, which make it clear that he may use it privately.]

Confession before a Priest helps many, because

(1) It checks any tendency to slackness in Self-examination. [Discuss.]

(2) It is hard, and so it is a way of proving that we are in earnest.

(3) We get the benefit of the Priest's advice.

(4) Hearing the words of Absolution pronounced to oneself is a wonderful spiritual experience.

[Read aloud the Absolution from the Visitation Service. Talk over any practical difficulties the class suggest, trying to give practical help over methods of self-examination, etc.]

HOME STUDY

Copy passages from the Bible and Prayer Book which prove that a Priest has authority to pronounce Absolution.

SUMMARY

Christ's Gifts: (4) *In Absolution.*

Absolution is the message of God's Forgiveness, pronounced by His Minister. The power to pronounce Absolution was first given by Our Blessed Lord to His Apostles (S. John xx. 22, 23).

It is received by every Priest at his ordination. If we would receive Absolution we must be sorry for our sins, confess them to God, try to do better.

XXVIII.—CHRIST'S GIFTS: (5) IN HOLY ORDERS

APPARATUS

Picture of the Call of the Twelve Apostles.

AIM

To show how the Ministers of the Church can trace their authority back through the Apostles to Our Blessed Lord Himself.

INTRODUCTION

[Briefly refer to the four last lessons with the aid of the list of the Seven Sacraments. Explain that as Holy Marriage was considered so recently, that subject will not be taken again.]

To-day we will think about Holy Orders. Probably very few of us have seen an Ordination, and so we are less familiar with that service than with others in our Prayer Book.

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—*The History of the Threefold Order of Ministers.*

[Refer to any society known to the class. Remind them how whoever is head of that particular society needs others to work under him.]

Our Blessed Lord as the Head of the Church needed Helpers in the same way, and before He went back to Heaven He arranged to leave on earth officers who would receive special powers from Him, and work under His directions.

A great deal of time was spent by Our Blessed Lord when He was on earth in choosing and training the twelve men who were to be the first officers in His Church.

[Let class tell what they remember about Our Blessed Lord's methods of training the twelve.]

The first ordination was a very solemn one.

Our Blessed Lord spent the previous night alone in prayer on one of the Hills of Galilee.

In the morning He gathered His followers around Him and one by one He called out the chosen twelve and ordained them to be the first officers in His Church, most probably by laying His Hands upon their heads. [Show picture. See S. Luke vi, 12–16.]

At first they were only allowed to help Him with the least important parts of the work, but gradually He gave them more and more powers, and when He returned to Heaven they had authority to do eight things.

[Let class suggest. Write on B.B. Preach. Baptize. Give Holy Communion. Give Absolution. Give the Blessing. Confirm,

Ordain other officers. Consecrate, or set apart and make holy what was to be used in God's Service.]

When the Church was small the Apostles were able to do all that was necessary themselves, but before long we hear of their using their power to ordain other officers.

The first officers ordained by them were called Deacons, and were given authority to preach and baptize. [B.B. See Acts vi. 1–6.]

A little later they needed still more help, and we read of them ordaining Elders or Priests, who, in addition to the powers given to Deacons, were able to give Holy Communion, Absolution, and the Blessing. [B.B. See Acts xiv. 23.]

Lastly, we hear of them ordaining Bishops with all the powers Our Blessed Lord had given to them. The Bishops had all the powers given to those in the lower Orders, and in addition could confirm, ordain, and consecrate. [B.B. See Titus i. 5–7.]

From then onwards our Church has had her threefold Order of Ministers, all ordained by the laying on of the hands of one belonging to the highest Order.

[Refer to the word Apostolic in the Nicene Creed. Show how the Ministers of the Church can trace their authority back, through an unbroken line of Bishops, to the Apostles and Our Blessed Lord Himself.]

Stage 2.—The threefold Order of Ministers to-day.

[Let the class find the Ordination Services in their Prayer Books. Notice that we speak of the Ordination of Priests and Deacons, but the Consecration of Bishops.]

(1) *The Ember Seasons.* [From the Rubrics let the class discover that Ordinations are usually only held four times a year, on the Sundays following the Ember Days. If they do not know, let them find out from the Table of Fasts when the Ember Days come.

Bishops are consecrated on any convenient Sunday or Holy Day.]

(2) *The Age for Ordinands.* [Let the class notice that in accordance with the Rubrics a Deacon must be at least twenty-three, a Priest twenty-four, and a Bishop thirty years of age.]

(3) *The Training of Ordinands.* [Discuss the training of men whose vocation seems clear. Tell of the efforts being made to provide the necessary education for those whose means do not allow of their incurring the expense themselves. Speak a little of the glorious

privilege of serving God in the Ministry, and using the wonderful powers which God's Ministers have.]

(4) *The Ordination Gift.* [Let the class tell what the outward sign is in this Sacrament. Let them discover from the Ordination Services that the inward grace is the special help of the Holy Spirit.]

Stage 3.—The Church's Organization.

Ever since the latter part of the seventh century England has been divided into an increasing number of dioceses, each in charge of a Bishop. [This, of course, applies to the whole of the Anglican Communion.]

Sometimes a Bishop has one or more assistant or Suffragan Bishops.

To help the Bishop in his work the parishes in a diocese are divided into groups, called Rural Deaneries, under Rural Deans. In their turn the Rural Deaneries are arranged in two or more groups, called Archdeaconries, under Archdeacons.

All the dioceses in England are divided into two provinces, under the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.

[Explain the position with regard to Wales.]

So we get

(1) A Parish under a Parish Priest.

(2) A Rural Deanery, or group of Parishes, under a Rural Dean.

(3) An Archdeaconry, or group of Rural Deaneries, under an Archdeacon.

(4) A Diocese under a Bishop.

(5) A Province under an Archbishop.

[The class will probably want to know the meaning of the titles Vicar, Rector, Curate.]

HOME STUDY

Write down ways in which you think we can help God's Ministers in their work.

SUMMARY

Christ's Gifts: (5) *In Holy Orders.*

The three Orders of Ministers are Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. All are ordained by the laying-on of a Bishop's hands, and through this outward sign receive the Holy Spirit's special Help.

(1) Deacons may preach and baptize.

(2) Priests may also give Holy Communion, Absolution, and the Blessing.

(3) Bishops may also confirm, ordain, and consecrate.

XXIX.—CHRIST'S GIFTS: (6) IN HOLY UNCTION

REFERENCES

The following passages might be studied as well as those referred to in the lesson: 1 S. Pet. ii. 21; Heb. ii. 10; Rev. vii. 16, 17.

APPARATUS

Pictures of Our Blessed Lord healing the Sick, and of the Crucifixion.

AIM

To show how Our Blessed Lord wishes His Church to care for the Sick.

INTRODUCTION

[Let class see from the list that we have come to the last of the Seven Sacraments—Holy Unction.]

Holy Unction is the anointing of the Sick with Holy Oil; but before we think of the Gift given in this way, we will try and see why at some time or another we all have to suffer.

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—*God does not wish us to suffer.*

One sometimes hears people talk as though it were rather unkind of God to let them suffer. [Discuss. Many people during the last war said they could no longer believe in a God of Love.]

The first thing we want to be quite clear about is that God does not want us to suffer, and that if we ourselves had not upset His plans for us, we should be perfectly happy.

To see how God's plans were upset we have to go back to the time when God looked at the World He had created and "Behold it was very good" (Gen. i. 31).

We were thinking a little while ago how man, the highest of God's Creations, has a threefold nature, and possesses body, mind, and soul.

These three parts are so closely connected, that what affects one affects the other.

[Discuss. If our bodies are in great pain our minds cannot work. If our minds are worried, often our bodies become ill too.]

God's plan was that men should have healthy bodies, healthy minds, and healthy souls, free from pain, sorrow, and sin.

Then men sinned, and the disease which attacked their souls affected their minds and bodies too, so that into the World came not only sin, but sorrow and pain as well.

So God's first plan was spoilt; but out of the depth of His Love He made another, and sent His Son to be the Good Physician, to teach us how our bodies, our minds, and our souls may once more be restored to perfect health.

If we follow His directions, then one day we shall enter into the full joy of Heaven, where "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain" (Rev. xxi. 4).

Stage 2.—God overrules Evil for Good.

But though God does not want us to suffer He uses that suffering which is the inevitable result of sin, and brings good out of it.

[Discuss. When our bodies are ill we may have to undergo a painful operation or take disagreeable medicine to make us better. Suffering well borne, is a medicine which heals and strengthens our souls. Through bearing bravely suffering both of mind and body, we can undo in part the weakness left, even by sin which has been repented of and forgiven.]

Stage 3.—God suffers when we do.

Another thing we are inclined to forget is, that just as when those we love are in trouble we are unhappy too, so God feels all our troubles as though they were His own.

Because He has lived on earth as man, Our Blessed Lord knows just how we feel:

"No pain that we can bear, but He hath felt the smart."

[Show picture of Crucifixion and let class find Lam. i. 12.]

As we think of all Our Blessed Lord bore for us, we shall rejoice that we are counted worthy to suffer, and so share with Him in the great work of undoing the effects of sin and making the world what He would have it be.

Stage 4.—Suffering need not be the direct result of the sin of an Individual.

[Let class turn to S. John ix. 1-3, and notice how emphatically we are warned against thinking that suffering is always the direct result of the sin of an individual. Our Blessed Lord never sinned, but He suffered sorrow and pain.]

Stage 5.—The Church's Care for the Sick.

[Show picture of Our Blessed Lord healing the sick. Let class discuss.]

One of the things Our Blessed Lord particularly told the Apostle He wished His Church to do was to care for the sick in body and mind as well as the sick in soul.

[Let the class find in their Prayer Books the services for :—

(1) *The Visitation of the Sick.*—One of the ways in which the Church tries to carry out Our Blessed Lord's directions is by the Visitation of the Sick in their own homes.

(2) *The Communion of the Sick.*—Our Prayer Book also provides a shortened form of the Communion Service for use when the Blessed Sacrament is celebrated in a sick person's room.

Explain, if it seems advisable, " Reservation " for the sick, a custom of very great antiquity.]

Lastly we come to the sadly neglected Sacrament of Holy Unction. [B.B.]

The outward sign is the anointing with Holy Oil and Prayer. [B.B.]

The Gift given is recovery if that is God's Will, and forgiveness of all that would make the soul unfit for death. [B.B.]

It is thought that Our Blessed Lord may have given His disciples directions about this during the forty days after His Resurrection, for it is referred to in the earliest of the New Testament Books.

[Let class find S. James v. 14. Write on B.B. Help the class to notice how in Hymn 50, A. & M., in the fourth verse, we find reference to the healing of more than one kind of sickness :

" To heal the sick stretch forth Thine Hand
And bid the fallen sinner stand.
Shine forth and let Thy Light restore,
Earth's own true loveliness once more."]

HOME STUDY

How would you answer anyone who said to you : " God cannot really love men if He lets them suffer so ? "

SUMMARY

Christ's Gifts: (6) *In Holy Unction.*

In Holy Unction

(1) The outward sign is the anointing with Holy Oil and Prayer.

(2) The Gift given is restoration to health if that is God's Will, and the forgiveness of all that would make the soul unfit for death. S. James says: "Is any sick among you, let him send for the Elders of the Church, and let them pray over him anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he have committed sins they shall be forgiven him" (S. James v. 14).

XXX.—THE MEN WHO CRUCIFIED CHRIST

"Suffered under Pontius Pilate . . . descended into Hell"

APPARATUS

Pictures of the Nativity and the Crucifixion.

AIM

To make the class wish to spend Holy Week quietly and reverently.

INTRODUCTION

To-day we enter on the most solemn week in all the year, the week we rightly call "Holy" Week.

During this week the Church calls us to gaze on the greatest tragedy the world has ever known, and to-day we are to think about some of those who took part in that tragedy.

We are to think about the men who crucified Christ.

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—*The Jews who Rejected Him.*

[Hang up pictures of the Nativity and the Crucifixion. It is suggested that there should be rather more narrative than usual.]

These pictures show us the beginning and the end of the most Wonderful Life ever lived upon this earth.

[Draw attention to the picture of the Nativity. Suggest that an appropriate title would be "He came unto His Own" (S. John i. 11).]

Even as we gaze on our first picture we can trace the beginnings of the tragedy depicted in the second.

The only shelter the world offered Our Blessed Lord was the shelter of a stable ; the only ones to welcome Him were the Blessed Mother, her husband, and a few poor shepherds.

So on the first Christmas day began the rejection which reached its climax on the first Good Friday.

[Draw attention to the picture of the Crucifixion. Suggest that an appropriate title would be " His own received Him not " (S. John i. 11). Refer to Lesson XXIII and let the class recall the reasons considered then for the rejection of Him Who " Went about doing good " (Acts x. 38).]

" Men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil " (S. John iii. 19).

To come up to Our Blessed Lord's standard was too much trouble, and so they plotted His Death.

" The Chief Priests and Scribes sought how they might kill Him " (S. Luke xxii. 2), and on the afternoon of the first Good Friday, in triumphant exultation, they watched Him die.

Stage 2.—Judas who sold Him.

But others took part in that tragedy, and foremost among these was the friend who betrayed Our Blessed Lord.

Judas, for whom Our Blessed Lord had done so much, Judas, who had been among that little band of followers to whom He had said : " Ye are my Friends " (S. John xv. 14), sold Him into the hands of His enemies for a handful of silver coins.

Stage 3.—The Witnesses who gave False Evidence.

With the help of Judas the enemies of Our Blessed Lord effected His arrest, but they had to secure the help of others before they could pass the death sentence.

[Let the class read and discuss S. Matt. xxvi. 59, 60.]

It is a sordid picture, man after man entering the Court paid to tell lies about the Prisoner.

Stage 4.—The Crowd who insulted Him.

Then from the moment of Our Blessed Lord's arrest until His death, there were those who at every opportunity mocked and insulted Him.

[Let different members of the class look up and read aloud S. Matt. xxvi. 67, xxvii. 28, 29, xxvii, 39, xxvii. 41, 42.]

Stage 5.—Pilate who consented to His Death.

The Jewish Council could not carry out a death sentence. When Our Blessed Lord had been condemned by the High-Priest, the consent of Pilate the Roman Governor had to be obtained.

Convinced of Our Blessed Lord's innocence, Pilate held out for a long time, and then gave in for fear of displeasing those upon whom his tenure of office largely depended.

[Let the class find and discuss S. Matt. xxvii. 24.]

Stage 6.—The Soldiers who Crucified Him.

"Then the soldiers took Jesus" (S. Matt. xxvii. 27), and carried out the sentence of crucifixion.

[Discuss. They were only doing their duty, but their attitude seems callous (see S. Matt. xxvii. 35). Only one seems to have felt pity (see S. Matt. xxvii. 48). One wonders if the others tried to spare their Prisoner unnecessary pain.]

Stage 7.—"They do crucify . . . the Son of God afresh."

It is easy to condemn those of whom we have thought, yet we have all been even as they.

(1) *How we can reject Christ.*—[Discuss how refusing to accept Our Blessed Lord's moral standard, never going to the churches where He has promised to be present, never receiving Him in the Blessed Sacrament, are some of the ways in which we reject Him. B.B.]

(2) *How we can betray Christ.*—[Discuss the importance of living up to our Christian profession. Tell of the Hindu student who said: "If a Christian can act like that, I don't want to have anything to do with Christ." B.B.]

(3) *How we can be False Witnesses.*—[Discuss how by our silence when Our Blessed Lord is attacked, we often give a false impression. B.B.]

(4) *How we can insult Christ.*—[Discuss how, consciously or unconsciously, we may insult Our Blessed Lord, by want of reverence, swearing, the careless singing of hymns and carols. B.B.]

(5) *How we can consent to Christ's Death.*—[Discuss how we are like Pilate when we know what is right and do what is wrong. B.B.]

(6) *How we can crucify Christ.*—[Let class find and discuss Heb. vi. 6. B.B.

Close by an informal talk about the observance of Holy Week, if possible giving out papers with particulars of the services to the members of the class.]

HOME STUDY

Make a private plan as to the observance of Holy Week.

SUMMARY

The Men who Crucified Christ.

We are like

(1) The Jews who rejected Christ, when we do not accept His standard, and neglect His House and the Blessed Sacrament.

(2) Judas who betrayed Him, when we do not live up to our Christian Profession.

(3) The False Witnesses, if we are silent when He is attacked.

(4) The Mocking Crowd, if we do not reverence Holy Things.

(5) Pilate who consented to His Death, if we know what is right and do not do it.

(6) The Soldiers who crucified Him, when we do what is wrong.

XXXI.—THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

"The third day He rose again from the Dead"

APPARATUS

Suitable Easter Pictures. Flowers to decorate room.

AIM

By helping the class to understand the Easter Message of Joy and Hope, to arouse a desire to worship.

INTRODUCTION

[Draw attention to the efforts which have been made to make the room extra bright and festive. Lead on to the thought of the decorations in church, and contrast the joyful character of the services with the solemnity of Good Friday.]

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—*Easter Joy.* [B.B.]

Let us think why Easter is a time for rejoicing.

There is a passage in the Bible which gives us three reasons.

[Let the class find and read silently Rev. i. 18. Then try and draw from them the three reasons.]

(1) "*I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore.*"

As we gazed at the Cross on Good Friday, looking up into the Face of Him Who for our sakes suffered there, no doubt we thought of His Words:

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (S. John xv. 13).

No doubt too, in response to His Love, ours went out to Him and we mourned because we had added to His pain.

But how terrible it would have been, if the last picture which the Bible had given us of Our Blessed Lord had been the picture of His death! [Discuss.]

How thankful we feel that instead we have the picture in which we are allowed to see Him in all the Glory of His Risen Life:

"He Who bore all pain and loss,
Comfortless upon the Cross,
Lives in glory now on high,
Pleads for us and hears our cry—
Alleluia."

Our Blessed Lord is alive. He can never suffer in the same way again, and He is ever ready, as we journey along the Road of Life, to help us to tread the path that He has trod.

So we find our first reason for Easter Joy. [Summarize on B.B.]

(2) "*And have the keys of Hell.*"—The next few words in the same verse give us yet another reason. [Discuss their meaning. If we have the keys of any place we have control over that place.]

When Our Blessed Lord asserts that He holds the keys of Hell He is proclaiming His Victory over the Powers of Evil after He had fought with them His last great battle and prevailed:

"The Strife is o'er, the battle done,
Now is the Victor's triumph won.
O let the song of Praise be sung—
Alleluia."

[Summarize on B.B. If we take Hades as the correct translation of the word rendered Hell, this still applies in the light of 1 Cor. xv, 56.]

(3) "*And of death.*"—The next three words give us our third reason for rejoicing. [Discuss.]

Our Blessed Lord asserts His Power not only over the Forces of Evil, but over Death.

Once Death had seemed so terrible, so strong, but Our Blessed Lord was stronger still:

"Death's mightiest powers have done their worst,"

but all in vain.

[Remind class of Lesson XIV, and let them read again S. John x. 17, 18. Summarize on B.B.]

Stage 2.—Easter Hope. [B.B.]

But Easter is not only a time of Joy—it is a time of Hope.

[Let class discover the reason for this in 1 Cor. xv. 20 and S. John xiv. 19. Summarize on B.B.]

Before Our Blessed Lord's Resurrection Death was a terrifying mystery, and no one who was parted by death from one they loved knew if they would ever see that loved one again.

Now we can say with S. Paul: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. xv. 55).

We no longer fear death for ourselves or those whom we love, for we know it is but the entry into a fuller life, a little nearer to God, a little nearer to Heaven.

"Jesus lives! No longer now
Can thy terrors, death, appal us.
Jesus lives! By this we know
Thou, O grave, canst not enthral us."

[Some Leaders may like to tell briefly the "Story of the King's Ferry Boat," from "The Legend of the Silver Cup," by Critchley.]

Stage 3.—Easter Worship. [B.B.]

Easter Joy and Easter Hope fill us with the longing to join in Easter Worship.

[The following section will need adapting if all the class are not yet Communicants.]

From early dawn the Church Bells have been ringing, bidding us hasten to the Altar, to pour out our love and our praise to Him Who in the Blessed Sacrament makes the Altar His Throne.

He Who died upon the Cross, He Who rose from the grave, He Who is alive for evermore was there, and we were not only able to kneel at His Feet and worship as did the Magdalene on the first Easter morning, but we were able to receive Him into our very hearts. Ought it not to be true of us that

> "We go forth in the strength His Presence gives,
> And we know that we are living, because He lives"?

HOME STUDY

The class might like to make a list of passages which they can look out at home illustrating the three thoughts around which the lesson has centred and giving reasons for Easter Joy, Hope, and Worship.

SUMMARY

The Resurrection of Christ.

(1) *Easter Joy.*—Easter is a happy time because we are reminded that

(*a*) Our Blessed Lord is alive (Rev. i. 18).
(*b*) He has conquered sin (Rev. i. 18).
(*c*) He has conquered death (Rev. i. 18).

(2) *Easter Hope.*—Easter is a time of hope because Our Blessed Lord's Resurrection is the pledge of ours (1 Cor. xv. 20; S. John xiv. 19).

(3) *Easter Worship.*—In the Blessed Sacrament we come to meet our Living Lord, and be made partakers of His Risen Life.

NOTE ON LESSONS XXXII TO XXXIV

These lessons were an attempt to answer a number of questions asked by the members.

The questions were the outcome of a rather casual reference by the Leader in a previous lesson to the End of the World. The subject under discussion had to be abandoned, and for nearly an hour question

followed question with such rapidity that the Leader had some difficulty in noting them all down, and no attempt was made at the time to give adequate answers.

This explains the form in which the three outlines which follow are arranged.

XXXII.—THE FRUITS OF THE RESURRECTION: (1) THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

"I BELIEVE IN . . . THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS"

REFERENCES

"Belief in Christ" (Gore). "The Hope of Immortality" (Welldon). "Paradise" (Holmes).

APPARATUS

Picture, "The Place of Meeting." The Apostles' Creed on sheet.

AIM

To help the class to understand what we mean when we say that we believe in the Communion of Saints.

INTRODUCTION

[Hang up sheet with words of the Apostles' Creed, and let class recall which phrases have been considered in this course.]

Last week we were keeping the Festival of Our Blessed Lord's Resurrection and thinking of the words: "the Third Day He rose again from the dead."

For the next three weeks we are going to think of three more great truths which we say we believe in, in that Creed, and of which Our Blessed Lord's Resurrection makes us sure.

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—*The Communion of Saints.*

We will think to-day of the Communion of Saints.

[Discuss the meaning of the word Saint. To us the word signifies one whose life is conspicuous for its goodness, but in New Testament times the name was given to anyone who had been admitted into the

Church by Holy Baptism, and was being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Let the class discover this wider meaning from Eph. i. 1.]

When we say we believe in the Communion of Saints we mean we believe that a special bond of union exists between baptized members of the Holy Catholic Church, whether they are still living on earth or whether they have passed within the Veil.

S. Paul gives us a number of reasons for this, and each one is like a strand which makes stronger the rope which unites all faithful followers of Our Blessed Lord.

[Let the class discover the different strands in this rope—

(1) *One Lord.*—Eph. iv. 5 : All own One Lord.

(2) *One Faith.*—Eph. iv. 5 : All believe the truths He taught.

(3) *One Baptism.*—Eph. iv. 5 : All have been made His Followers in Holy Baptism.

(4) *One Body.*—1 Cor. xii. 14 : All are therefore members of the One Holy Catholic Church.

(5) *One Spirit.*—1 Cor. vi. 17 : All receive the same Gift of the Indwelling Spirit in Confirmation.

(6) *One Bread.*—1 Cor. x. 17 : In the Blessed Sacrament all may have the same Food.

(7) *One Hope.*—Eph. i. 18 : All look forward to a life of perfect union with God.]

Stage 2.—The Church Militant.

Let us think of the fellowship which should exist between members of the Church on Earth.

[Let a class member read aloud verse 5 of Hymn 538, A. & M.]

Stronger far than that which divides them is that which unites them.

[Let a class member read the first two lines of verse 6. Discuss how we want always to be on the look out for opportunities of deepening the spirit of fellowship. Refer to the differences of opinion about comparatively slight matters which have brought about divisions in the Church. Suggest that this must cause sorrow to the Heart of Him Who wanted His Church to be One Flock under One Shepherd. We want to hold fast to the points which unite us to our Fellow-Christians and pray that there may soon be no differences between us.]

Stage 3.—The Church Expectant.

Let us pass on to think of the union which exists between the members of the Church on Earth and in Paradise.

(1) *Do the Faithful Departed know what is happening on Earth?* [B.B.]

The Parable of Dives and Lazarus seems to suggest an affirmative answer to this question. [Discuss. After his death Dives could still remember and take an interest in those on earth (S. Luke xvi).]

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us that the progress of the Church on Earth is watched by the Church in Paradise with the same keen interest that spectators in the great Amphitheatre at Rome watched the contests in the arena. [Let class find and discuss Heb. xii. 1.]

S. John tells us that as they watch they pray. [Let class find and discuss Rev. v. 8).

(2) *Must not things they see happening trouble the Faithful Departed?* [B.B.]

The Faithful Departed only see as much of the sin and sorrow of earth as God thinks fit, and for two reasons we need not think that what they see must wholly disturb their peace.

[Discuss: (*a*) How it is the watching when one is powerless to help which is such terribles uffering. The Faithful Departed have the joy of knowing that by their prayers they can help to purify the world and alleviate its pain. (*b*) They can see things in their true proportion and understand better than we can the outcome of what seems like chaos. Let class find Rom. viii. 8; Heb. ii. 10, and Rev. vii. 17.]

(3) *Can we communicate with the Faithful Departed?*

The Faithful Departed are with Our Blessed Lord, and the closer we draw to Him the closer we are to them. That is why the Blessed Sacrament is in such a wonderful way "The Place of Meeting." [Show picture. Quote:

"'Tis then I feel how near thou art,
Thy face I almost see,
When in the Eucharist I touch
The hand which touches thee."

Show how the Bible and Church are one in condemning other methods of communication as harmful, without denying that they are possible.]

Stage 4.—The Church Triumphant.

Lastly, there is our union with that part of the Church which is in Heaven. In Heaven Our Blessed Lord, the Head of the Church, reigns in Glory. In Holy Baptism we are united to Him, and in the Blessed Sacrament our union with Him is strengthened.

"He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, dwelleth in Me and I in Him" (S. John vi. 56).

At the Altar, Earth, Paradise, and Heaven are as one, and the Church, Militant, Expectant, and Triumphant unites to worship "The One God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. iv. 6).

HOME STUDY

Write down what you think belief in the Communion of Saints means.

SUMMARY

The Fruits of the Resurrection: (1) *The Communion of Saints.*

When we say we believe in the Communion of Saints we mean we believe that a special bond of union exists between members of the Holy Catholic Church, whether they are living on earth or have passed within the Veil.

The closer we draw to Our Blessed Lord the closer we draw to those who are with Him, and the Blessed Sacrament is in a special way the "Meeting Place" where Earth, Paradise, and Heaven are as one.

XXXIII.—THE FRUITS OF THE RESURRECTION: (2) THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY

"I believe in . . . the Resurrection of the Body"

REFERENCES

As for Lesson XXXII.

AIM

To help the class to understand what we mean when we say we believe in the Resurrection of the Body.

INTRODUCTION

To-day we are to think of another clause in our Creed.

[Write on B.B. "The Resurrection of the Body." Remind class of S. John xiv. 19.]

We shall see how because Our Blessed Lord rose from the dead on the first Easter Day, we believe that all the dead will one day "Rise again with their bodies."

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—Can a Christian believe in Re-incarnation? [B.B.]

The doctrine of re-incarnation, or the coming to earth again of the soul in another form, has been taught for hundreds of years by the principal religions of the East. Of recent years people have wondered whether or not it is a possible belief for a Christian, but careful study seems to show that it is contrary to the teaching of Our Blessed Lord.

(1) If we have all of us been to earth in other forms, then, since we can neither remember nor be remembered, memory and personality cannot survive death. [Discuss this. Our Blessed Lord in the Parable of Dives and Lazarus (S. Luke xvi.), and by His Words to the Penitent Thief (S. Luke xxiii. 43) seems to point to a survival both of memory and personality.]

(2) If we are all of us to come to earth again in other forms, then all that Our Blessed Lord taught us about the life in Paradise is contradicted, for we can no longer think of the Blessed Dead at rest and interceding for us. [Discuss Rev. vi. 9-11, viii. 3, 4.]

Stage 2.—Is it our old Bodies which will rise again? [B.B.]

The separation of body and spirit which takes place at death is only temporary. When Our Blessed Lord rose from the dead on the first Easter Day, His spirit was clothed in a real but glorified Body, and so it will be with us.

But S. Paul tells us very plainly that we are not to think that our spirits will re-enter the identical bodies laid in the grave, though these, in some mysterious way, contain the germ from which the new bodies will develop.

A beautiful plant bears little resemblance to the seed from which it grew, yet that seed alone had power to produce that particular plant; and so it is with our bodies. [Read aloud 1 Cor. xv. 42-44.]

In the case of those who will never see death, S. Paul tells us that their bodies will undergo a wonderful change. [See 1 Cor. xv. 51.

Cp. with the change in Our Blessed Lord's Body, which of course did not "See corruption."]

Stage 3.—What is a Spiritual Body? [B.B.]

A spiritual body is one which is completely under the control of the spirit. Now there is constant warfare between the two, for, as S. Paul tells us: "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other" (Gal. v. 17).

But the day will come when our glorified spirits will enter glorified bodies, which will be a help and not a hindrance.

[Let the class find and discuss 2 Cor. v. 1, 2.]

Then and then only will our human nature have reached perfection, and body, mind, and soul be in perfect harmony.

[Warn the class against trying to form definite conclusions upon points about which we have had as yet no clear revelation.]

We want to be content to say as S. John did:

"It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 S. John iii. 2).]

Stage 4.—Was Our Blessed Lord's Body completely Spiritual before His Ascension? [B.B.]

Scholars do not all agree upon this question, and we must be satisfied not to understand fully.

Many think that during the Great Forty Days Our Blessed Lord's Body was in a transition stage and did not become entirely spiritualized until His Ascension, in order that He might the more easily convince His disciples that He was alive.

This would perhaps throw new light on the passages which speak of Our Blessed Lord as eating and drinking after His Resurrection, and referring to His Body as a material One with flesh and bones.

[Let the class find S. John vii. 39, and discuss the significance of this reference to the Ascension.]

Stage 5.—If our Bodies are changed, shall we recognize each other? [B.B.]

When one thinks it over carefully, one realizes that it is by personality, rather than by outward form, that we recognize each other here. [Discuss. People who are born blind and deaf get to know their

friends, and we believe that one spirit can get into touch with another without the use of the bodily senses. We can feel if another person is sympathetic or antagonistic, because of this power of intercommunication of spirits.]

So, because our personality will be ours throughout eternity, we feel certain that in the future life there will be recognition.

Tennyson puts it very clearly when he says:

"Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside,
And I shall know him when we meet."

[Let the class read through Hymn 499, A. & M. Note especially verse 7:

"On that happy Easter morning
All the graves their dead restore,
Father, sister, child and mother
Meet once more."]

HOME STUDY

It will probably be well to suggest the class noting down any further points connected with this subject which they would like discussed.

SUMMARY

The Fruits of the Resurrection: (2) *The Resurrection of the Body.*

Death is the separation of Body and Spirit.

We believe that a day will come when our glorified spirits will enter glorified bodies, completely under their control, and working in perfect harmony with them.

"Soul and body reunited
Thenceforth nothing shall divide,
Waking up in Christ's own Likeness,
Satisfied."

XXXIV.—THE FRUITS OF THE RESURRECTION: (3) THE LIFE EVERLASTING

"I BELIEVE IN . . . THE LIFE EVERLASTING"

REFERENCES

As for Lesson XXXII

AIM

To help the class to understand what we mean when we say we believe in the Life Everlasting.

INTRODUCTION

[Write up on B.B. "The Life Everlasting."]

To-day we are going to think of these words, and to help us we will divide our thoughts under four headings.

[Write on B.B. "The End of the World," "Judgment," "Heaven," "Hell."]

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—The End of the World.

(1) *What is meant by the End of the World?*

Our Blessed Lord said, "Heaven and Earth shall pass away" (S. Matt. xxiv. 35).

One day there will be a final triumph of right, and a final overthrow of evil, and that day will see the passing of the present world order. From out of the old will emerge "A new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 S. Pet. iii. 13).

This new earth will be a fitting home for those who have entered into the full glory of the Resurrection Life.

(2) *Can we find out from the Bible when the End of the World will be?*

[See if the class can recall anything Our Blessed Lord said about this. Let them find S. Matt. xxiv. 36.]

Our Blessed Lord tells us this is a secret which God has revealed to no one—not even to the Angels.

(3) *What does the Bible tell us about Our Blessed Lord's return to earth?*

[Let the class find and discuss Acts i. 11.]

The Bible tells us that Our Blessed Lord will one day appear on earth in visible form, but we know very little about the manner of His Coming. [Discuss how the knowledge that we shall one day gaze on Perfect Beauty, Perfect Holiness, Perfect Love, should suffice.]

Stage 2.—Judgment.

(1) *How will Our Blessed Lord judge us?*

It will be the coming of Our Blessed Lord which will put an end to the struggle between good and evil and bring about the final triumph of right.

[Let a class member read aloud S. Matt. xxv. 32. Discuss, showing how the comparison with the proceedings in an earthly Law Court must not be pressed too far. There will be no questioning, no anxious waiting for the sentence.]

The moment we see Our Blessed Lord we shall know our destiny.

If we have given ourselves to Him so completely that He has been able to transform us into His Likeness, then we shall feel His Love drawing us into that closest possible union with Him, which *is* Heaven, and which is the reward of the faithful to whom He shall say "Come."

If, on the other hand, we have resisted His efforts, we shall see in His Eyes all the sorrow of rejected love, and we shall "Depart" into that state of separation from Him which *is* Hell.

Heaven is not a reward Our Blessed Lord can give to whom He will; it is something we make for ourselves.

Similarly Hell is not a punishment He can inflict on anyone, but it too is something we make for ourselves.

Stage 3.—*Heaven.*

[Remind the class of the early ideas about Heaven referred to in Lesson II.]

Gradually God led men to realize that the early materialistic view of Heaven was scientifically impossible, and slowly He has revealed to us that Heaven is a state rather than a place.

Heaven is where God is, and when His Likeness is made perfect in us and our union with Him is complete, we shall be in Heaven. That is what is meant when we hear it said that Heaven is character.

(1) *What is meant when we are told that Eternal Life is the reward of the faithful? Do not all spirits live on in Heaven or Hell? In what sense do we say the wages of sin is death?*

The spirits of all men are immortal; they cannot die, but when Our Blessed Lord speaks of Eternal Life He does not mean just existence. [Let the class discover this from S. Matt. xxv. 46.]

Eternal life to Our Blessed Lord, meant life in union with God, the most perfect kind of life possible. [Let class discuss S. John xvii. 3.]

That is why Our Blessed Lord speaks of Eternal Life as something we can possess here, though it will not be perfected till hereafter.

Life apart from God is so terrible that we may well call it death.

(2) *We are taught to look forward to life in Heaven; what therefore is meant by the passages which speak of a New Earth?*

This difficulty disappears if we think of Heaven as a state, not a place.

Our Blessed Lord taught us to pray "Thy Kingdom come . . . on earth," and we are told that the Kingdoms of this World are to become the Kingdom of Our Lord and of His Christ (Rev. xi. 15).

Bishop Gore, in "Belief in Christ," explains the phrase "A New Heaven and a New Earth" as meaning that

"All the treasures of Heaven are to be fused with a purged and renewed earth" (see Rev. xix. 7, 8. Cp. with the Marriage of the Lamb).

(3) *What will the life in Heaven be like?*

We cannot answer this question fully, but we know that when we have found Him in Whose Presence is the fullness of Joy we shall have satisfied every longing of our inmost souls.

[Refer to Lesson XIX, and what was said then about the contribution to be made by individuals and by nations to the joy of Heaven.

Tennyson says, "I know transplanted human worth
Will bloom to profit otherwhere."]

Stage 4.—*Hell.*

[Discuss the symbolical language necessarily used in the Bible with reference to Heaven and Hell. Quote:

"What is Hell but an eternal thirst;
And burning for the bounty once rejected."]

HOME STUDY

Write down your earliest ideas of the End of the World, Judgment, Heaven, Hell, and say how they have developed.

SUMMARY

The Fruits of the Resurrection: (3) *The Life Everlasting.*

(1) *The End of the World.*—From the old will emerge "A New Earth wherein dwell righteousness" (2 S. Pet. iii. 13; see also S. Matt. xxiv. 35).

(2) *Judgment.*—There will be a final separation of good and evil.

(3) *Heaven* is that state of union with God which is only possible when His Likeness is made perfect in us.

(4) *Hell* is that state of separation from God caused by a deliberate rejection of His Love.

XXXV.—THE POWER OF INTERCESSION (1)

REFERENCES

"The Way": "Lessons on Private Prayer" (Dent).

APPARATUS

Picture of Healing of Palsied Man. Model of Eastern House.

AIM

To help the class to realize the power of Intercession.

INTRODUCTION

We shall soon be keeping the Rogation days once more. The word Rogation means asking, so to-day and next Sunday we will think about that part of Prayer which we call Intercession.

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—The Meaning of Prayer.

[Write on B.B. "What is Prayer?" Discuss.]

Religion, it has been beautifully said, is an intimate friendship with God. In that friendship there is a Divine and a Human element, and prayer is the means by which the two may meet, and God and Man may get into touch with each other.

We shall never really know what prayer is, until we know what it is to feel that we are touching God and He is touching us. Every time we come into touch with God in this way we receive something from Him, and His Beauty, His Holiness, and His Love make a mark upon our character.

[Discuss. Help the class to see how we have a most wonderful example of the effect of prayer in the account of Our Blessed Lord's Transfiguration. Let the class turn to S. Luke ix. 28-32. Picture the scene vividly. So completely did Our Blessed Lord enter into communion with His Father that His Humanity no longer hid His Divinity, and from Him radiated the Glory of God.]

Stage 2.—The Power of Intercession.

Intercession is prayer for other people.

When we pray for another we bring that person into touch with God, and this is a glorious thought.

[Write Tennyson's well-known lines on B.B., and discuss:

"More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats,
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer,
Both for themselves, and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the Feet of God."]

Stage 3.—The Difficulty of Intercession.

But intercession is not always easy.

[Discuss. It means giving up time we would rather spend on ourselves. It is hard work to concentrate our thoughts on God, and those for whom we would pray, and so act as a real link in the golden chain which binds them to Him. It is discouraging when the months and the years pass by without our seeing any visible result of our efforts.]

Yet we have thought before how, if what we do for others is to be of real value, it must cost us something, and so we must be prepared for intercession to be hard work.

In the New Testament we have a striking example of how the difficulties we meet with in intercession can be overcome.

[Let class read the account of the Healing of the Palsied Man in S. Mark ii. 1-12. By questions draw out the following points:

(1) The four men were quite sure that the only One who had power to help their sick friend was Our Blessed Lord, but in order to bring him to Him they had to give up their time.

(2) On the way they had to face difficulties. Describe with aid of model how the crowd around the house where Our Blessed Lord was teaching was so dense that they were unable to reach Him. Show how they would climb on to the flat roof by means of the outside staircase and make an opening sufficiently large to enable them to lower their friend down until he was lying at the Feet of Our Blessed Lord.

(3) At first they must have wondered if their trouble had been in vain. Our Blessed Lord saw that the sick man's greatest need was for spiritual rather than bodily healing, and He dealt with the disease which had attacked his soul first.

Help the class to see how his friends' trouble would have been amply repaid if Our Blessed Lord had done no more.]

Stage 4.—"*All Sorts and Conditions of Men.*"

Let us think how we may imitate the four friends of whom we have been thinking, and by our intercession help "All sorts and conditions of men."

[Discuss the following points:

(1) We must realize God's nearness and God's power to help.

(2) We must think of the needs of the person or cause we want to help.

(3) We must lay that person or that cause before God, asking Him to help them in whatever way He sees best.

(4) We must listen in case God wishes to show us some further way in which we ourselves can help them.]

When once we realize the wonderful things intercession can do we shall need a definite plan about it.

[Let class combine to make practical suggestions. Most people find it best to make a list with subjects of intercession for every day in the week.]

But besides those we pray for regularly we shall get many sudden opportunities of bringing someone in need to God.

[Discuss. We see someone do something wrong, or we meet someone in trouble, and we ask God to help them. We read of some crime or some tragedy in the newspaper, and instead of talking about it we give the time to prayer. We see a funeral go by, and we bring before God the needs of the soul who has passed within the Veil.]

HOME STUDY

Make up a scheme of Intercession for private use.

SUMMARY

The Power of Intercession (1).

Religion is an intimate friendship with God, and prayer is the means by which God and Man get into touch with each other.

[Write beneath Tennyson's lines quoted in Stage 2:

"More things are wrought by prayer," etc.]

XXXVI.—THE POWER OF INTERCESSION (2)

APPARATUS

Pictures of Rogationtide Processions.

AIM

To prepare the class to keep Rogation Days.

INTRODUCTION

[Let the class find the Table of Fasts in their Prayer Books and notice the Rogation Days. Refer again to the meaning of the word.]

To-day we will try and see why these three days before Ascension Day have been especially set apart for Intercession.

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—*Man's need of God's Help.*

[Discuss how easily we forget that

"All good gifts around us,
Are sent from Heaven above."

Suggest that perhaps that is the reason why God sometimes withholds His Help until we bring our needs to Him, and after we have done our best ourselves, ask Him to do for us, what we cannot do for ourselves.]

On Rogation Days we bring before God the needs of our bodies and the needs of our souls.

(1) *Spiritual needs.* [Let class suggest some of the things our souls need. Strength to resist temptation; the power to go on growing in grace and bringing forth the "Fruit of the Spirit"; a deeper knowledge of God, etc., etc. Refer to the heathen world and to the spiritual needs of the souls still without Christian teaching.]

(2) *Material needs.* [Pass on to discuss material needs, that is the needs of our bodies. Remind the class that

"We plough the fields and scatter
The good seed on the land,
But it is fed and watered
By God's Almighty Hand."

Let them compile a list of some of those who help to provide us with our daily bread, and tell how on Rogation Days we ask God to bless the work of the Farmers, Gardeners, Fishermen, and all who labour to provide us with food and clothing ; also the Miners, Doctors, Nurses, and others who attend to other bodily needs.]

Stage 2.—The Origin of Rogation Days.

We first hear of Rogation Days towards the close of the fifth century. During the winter of the year 477, terrible earthquakes shook the little town of Vienne in Gaul, destroying houses, uprooting trees and doing terrible damage.

When Spring came no crops could be sown, and with no harvest to look forward to it seemed as though a famine was inevitable.

The most terrible earthquake of all came on Easter day when the Bishop, whose name was Mamertus, was celebrating Holy Communion in the Cathedral.

The terrified people rushed out, and in many cases found that their homes and all they possessed had been utterly destroyed.

The Bishop alone was left in the Cathedral, and he stood before the Altar wrapt in prayer and meditation.

Before he went home he had made up his mind that he would try and unite the people in a great prayer effort, in which they would bring their needs to God.

He ordered therefore that the three days before Ascension Day should be set apart as special days of prayer for God's Mercy. Each day led by the Clergy and Choir, the people went in procession round their town singing litanies in which they asked that God would, if He saw fit, cause the earthquakes to cease and give them a good harvest.

The earthquakes did cease, the people set to work with a will to rebuild their homes and plant their gardens and fields so that the threatened famine was averted.

Very soon other Bishops imitated the custom started by the Bishop of Vienne, and before long an order was made throughout the whole Church, that the three days before Ascension Day should be kept as special days of prayer for the Harvest and other needs both material and spiritual.

Stage 3.—The Observance of Rogation Days.

While all these things were happening on the Continent, the Church

in Britain was in a very sad state. Heathen invaders had driven the Christians west and destroyed all the churches, so that except in Cornwall and Wales our land was almost entirely heathen again, and it is unlikely that Rogation Days were observed before the coming of S. Augustine in the year 597.

S. Augustine and a band of missionaries came from Rome and settled in Kent and began the task of converting the heathen who had driven out the British Christians.

From then onward Rogation Days were kept in our own land and a special litany written in Latin was used.

Petitions from this were translated and incorporated in the first English litany drawn up by Archbishop Cranmer nearly one thousand years later.

[Let class recall the petition referring to the Harvest: "That it may please Thee to bless and preserve to our use the kindly fruits of the earth," etc. Show picture of Rogationtide Processions. Refer to the custom of "Beating the Bounds."

Pass on to speak of the special services to be held in the Parish during Rogationtide.

Discuss practical ways in which those whose work prevents their attending services may observe the Rogation Days.

Some may be able to get to church during the dinner hour for a short time.

Others may find they can get up or go to bed a little earlier in order to give more time to prayer.

Speak of the Great Festival of the Ascension and the services to be held then.]

HOME STUDY

Make a private plan as to how you will keep Rogation Days.

SUMMARY

The Power of Intercession (2).

Rogation Days are the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday before Ascension Day.

The word Rogation means asking.

The Rogation Days have been kept since the fifth century as special days of prayer that God will give us

"All things that be needful both for our souls and bodies."

XXXVII.—THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST

"He ascended into Heaven . . . quick and the dead"

REFERENCES

"The Ascended Christ" (Swete).

APPARATUS

Nelson's picture; Jesus the World's Saviour and King.

AIM

To help the class to understand something of the meaning of the Ascension.

INTRODUCTION

[Hang up picture and discuss.]

Last Thursday we were keeping the Festival of Our Blessed Lord's Return to Heaven. We usually speak of this as His Ascension. [B.B.]

To-day we will think what we really mean when we use this word, and when we say "He ascended into Heaven."

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—*The Meaning of the Ascension.*

(1) *At His Ascension Our Blessed Lord returned to Heaven taking with Him the Human Nature He assumed at the Incarnation.*

[Discuss the sense in which we rightly speak of Heaven as being above us and of Our Blessed Lord ascending there. Heaven is not above us in a material sense, but in the same way that we speak of the highest class in a school being above the lowest. When we speak of Our Blessed Lord's Ascension, we mean His return to that higher sphere of life which He left when for our sakes He became Man.]

It is a glorious thought that Our Blessed Lord did not put off again that Human Nature that He took at the Incarnation, but that He carried it back with Him into Heaven.

[Discuss the significance of this, letting the class study verse 5 of Hymn 148, A. & M.:

"He has raised our human nature,
On the clouds to God's Right Hand,
There we sit in Heavenly Places
There with Him in Glory stand:
Jesus reigns adored by Angels,
Man with God is on the Throne;
Mighty Lord in Thine Ascension,
We by faith behold our own."]

(2) *At His Ascension it was only Our Blessed Lord's Visible Presence that was withdrawn.*

[Discuss. Had Our Blessed Lord remained on earth His Visible Presence would have been limited to a particular place at a particular time. From the moment of His Ascension He became spiritually present everywhere. Hence it has been beautifully said that He went away from us, so that He might be nearer to us.]

Stage 2.—The Gladness of Heaven.

It is wonderful to think of the joy of Heaven on the first Ascension day.

Thirty-three years before, Our Blessed Lord had left His Heavenly Home and come into the world as a little Human Child.

"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (S. John iii. 16).

With loving care the Heavenly Hosts had watched over and guarded Him during His earthly Life, suffering with Him the agony which He endured in order to accomplish the World's Salvation.

On the first Ascension Day we can imagine the triumphant joy with which He would be welcomed back.

Through choirs of angels singing their songs of praise we can think of Him passing into the immediate Presence of His Father, there to be crowned King of the Kingdom He had won upon the Cross. It is only possible dimly to picture the wonder of that Coronation Day.

"The Head that once was crowned with thorns,
Is crowned with Glory now;
A royal diadem adorns
The Mighty Victor's brow.

The highest place that Heaven affords
Is His, is His by right,
The King of Kings and Lord of Lords
And Heaven's eternal Light."

[The phrase "Sitteth on the Right Hand of God the Father Almighty," might be connected with the last four lines.]

Stage 3.—The Gladness of Earth.

[Let the class find and discuss S. Luke xxiv. 51-52.]

At first it is harder to understand why the first Ascension Day should have been a day of rejoicing for Our Blessed Lord's followers, left behind on earth.

[Let the class discover reasons from the following passages:

(1) S. John xiv. 28: They would rejoice in Our Blessed Lord's Joy.

(2) S. John xiv. 2-3: They would comfort themselves with the thought of the Heavenly Home He had gone to prepare for them.

(3) S. John vi. 56, xiv. 18: They would remember His Promise to come to them in the Blessed Sacrament.

(4) S. John xvi. 7: They would look forward to the Coming of the Holy Spirit to dwell within them.

(5) S. Matt. xxviii. 20: They had the assurance of Our Blessed Lord's continued spiritual Presence with them.]

Stage 4.—The Ascension Message.

[Let the class find and discuss Acts i. 11. Lead on to the thought of the preparation required if we are to be fit to live in the home Our Blessed Lord has gone to prepare for us. Read aloud Rev. xxi. 27.]

HOME STUDY

Say why you think Ascension day is among the greatest of the Church's Festivals.

SUMMARY

The Ascension of Christ.

When Our Blessed Lord returned to Heaven, He took with Him the Human Nature that had become His at the Incarnation. It was only His Visible Presence that was withdrawn in order that He might be spiritually present everywhere.

Heaven is not above us in a material sense but in the sense that the highest class in school is above the lowest.

"Jesus reigns adored by Angels,
Man with God is on the Throne,
Blessed Lord in Thine Ascension,
We by Faith behold our own."

XXXVIII.—THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

"I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY GHOST"

APPARATUS

Picture of the Disciples receiving the Gift of the Holy Spirit.

AIM

To help the class to understand the work which Our Blessed Lord wants the Holy Spirit to do in our hearts.

INTRODUCTION

To-day we are keeping the great Festival of the Holy Spirit.

[Hang up picture. Read aloud Acts i. 8-9, referring to the promise of the Coming of the Holy Spirit, and Acts ii. 1-4, referring to its fulfilment.]

Let us try and understand what the Gift was that the first Christians received on that first Whit-Sunday, and how that same Gift may become ours if we will accept it.

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—*I believe in the Holy Ghost.*

The Holy Spirit whom Our Blessed Lord promised should come and live in the hearts of His Followers is a Real Person.

[Let the class find proof of this in Rom. xv. 30, viii. 26; Eph. iv. 30; 1 Cor. xii. 8, noticing that S. Paul tells us that the Holy Spirit loves us, prays for us, is grieved when we do wrong, and gives us gifts.]

Very clearly we are told too that He is God.

[Let the class notice S. Matt. xxviii. 19. Quote from the Athanasian Creed: "The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God."]

From the earliest times the Holy Spirit has been at work in the world helping men in different ways.

[Let class suggest.

It is the Holy Spirit Who gives, not only to men, but to plants and animals as well, that mysterious thing we call life. See Nicene Creed. It is He Who inspired the great Teachers and Writers whose messages are preserved in our Bible. See 2 S. Pet. i. 21 ; 2 Tim. iii. 16.

It is He Who, speaking to men through their conscience, has taught them to know right from wrong. See Is. xxx. 21.]

The Atonement made it possible for the Holy Spirit to come even closer to men and help them more than He had done before. Our Blessed Lord said :

" He dwelleth with you, but shall be in you " (S. John xiv. 17). And He promised that the result of that Gift of the Indwelling Spirit would be a great increase of spiritual power.

" Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you " (Acts i. 8).

Stage 2.—" Ye shall receive Power."

Spiritual power ! That is something we all need, for without power there can be no progress, and the Bible lays great stress on the importance of never standing still as we journey along the Road of Life.

As a matter of fact we cannot stand still, for directly we cease to make progress and become lukewarm, self-satisfied and spiritually lazy, we begin to go backwards.

" Does the Road wind uphill all the way ?
Yes, to the very end."

There are many passages in the Bible which speak of the need for never slackening effort.

[Let the class turn to 2 S. Pet. iii. 18 ; Gal. v. 22 ; Phil. iii. 13, 14, noticing that we are to " Grow in Grace," to bring forth " the Fruit of the Spirit," to reach forth " unto those things that are before," and to " press toward " our goal.]

The Christian life is not merely a negative thing ; it does not consist only in not doing certain things.

It is rather the Great Adventure, our opportunity to seek and to find the King Whose Name is above every Name, and in His Service to use and develop every God-given power of mind and body.

But there can be no progress unless there is power, and we too need the Gift which the Disciples received on the first Whit-Sunday and which becomes ours in Confirmation.

Stage 3.—"*Neglect not the Gift that is in thee.*"

But Confirmation is the beginning not the end; the power becomes ours, but it has to be used; the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within us, but He can do nothing unless we will let Him. S. Paul says: "Neglect not the Gift that is in thee" (1 Tim. iv. 14), and warns us not to resist the Spirit (Acts vi. 10). Discuss how the powers of the body must be exercised if they are to develop. Refer to Lesson VII and show how the same thing applies to the powers of the soul.

Stage 4.—"*The Fruit of the Spirit.*"

[Let the class discover from Gal. v. 22 the lines along which we should be making progress. Our Blessed Lord wants to see in us the

(1) *Love* which inspires each thought and word and action, which beautifies the commonplace things of life, and radiates from us to all around. He wants to see the

(2) *Joy* which no man can take from us, and which endures through earthly pain and sorrow, bringing happiness to all whom we meet. He wants to see the

(3) *Peace* which is of God, filling our hearts and inspiring our lives. He wants to see us

(4) *Long suffering*, patient in disappointment, patient when provoked. He wants to see the

(5) *Gentleness* which considers that courtesy is due even to a little child. He wants to see the

(6) *Goodness* which is only another name for Godliness or Godlikeness. He wants to see the

(7) *Faith* which will go on trusting when all seems dark and hopeless. He wants to see the

(8) *Meekness* which seeks God's Glory, not its own. He wants to see the

(9) *Temperance* which can control both mind and body. The class might like to copy the following prayer:

"Make us, O Lord, like a fruitful tree planted in Thy Garden, and vouchsafe that we, being watered by the showers of Thy Grace, may bring forth to Thee plenteousness of Fruit in due season."]

HOME STUDY

Look up references to the Holy Spirit's work in S. John xiv. to xvi. and copy them out.

SUMMARY

The Fruit of the Spirit.

The Gift of the Indwelling Spirit which the first Christians received on the first Whit-Sunday, becomes ours in Confirmation.

The Holy Spirit will help us to bring forth in our lives the fruits of
Love, Joy, Peace,
Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness,
Faith, Meekness, Temperance (Gal. v. 22).

XXXIX.—WORKERS TOGETHER WITH GOD

REFERENCES

"The Glory of the Garden" (Kipling). [See "Twenty Poems by Rudyard Kipling."]

APPARATUS

Picture of any important and well-known Building.

AIM

To suggest ways in which we may respond to God's Call to be Workers together with Him.

INTRODUCTION

[Write on B.B. the word Vocation, and discuss its meaning.]

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—*The Meaning of Vocation.*

Vocation is a Latin word which means "Calling."

When we feel very strongly drawn to any particular work, usually that is the work which God is calling us to do, and to devote ourselves to it is to fulfil our vocation.

The call to work in some particular corner of the world at some particular task may come direct from God, or it may come through others whom He is using as His instruments.

[Discuss this, letting the class give instances or, if necessary, telling them how some particular Worker first heard God's call.]

Sooner or later God's Call comes to all of us, and with it comes the responsibility of accepting or refusing it, for in His Kingdom there is no forced labour.

Stage 2.—Workers together with God.

S. Paul tells us that all Christians are called to be "Workers together with God" (2 Cor. vi. 1).

The work in which God calls us to help Him is very wonderful. It is the bringing about the Salvation of the World.

[Discuss very simply. God wants us to help Him to make His Kingdom on Earth more like His Kingdom in Heaven.]

For hundreds of years that work has been going on and it may go on for hundreds more, but

"Nearer and nearer draws the time, the time that shall surely be,
When the earth shall be filled with the Glory of God, as the waters cover the sea."

[Discuss the following illustrations, or any others which suggest themselves.

(1) Suppose an Architect were to make plans for transforming some church where there was dirt, ugliness, and disorder into a beautiful Cathedral, he would need all kinds of workers to help him: and from the labourers employed to cart the rough material, to the artists engaged on the decoration all would be sharing in a great work. So it is with God the Heavenly Architect.

In order to carry out His plans for making His Kingdom on earth like His kingdom in Heaven, He needs workers of many different kinds. It may seem that some are entrusted with more important tasks than others, but as in a building everything depends on the foundations, so the valuable work is very often that which does not show.

(2) The same thought is brought out in a different way by Rudyard Kipling in his poem, "The Glory of the Garden."

Picturing our land as a beautiful garden, we can think of God as the Head Gardener. Kipling says of those who work under the Head Gardener:

"And some can pot begonias, and some can bud a rose,
And some are hardly fit to trust with anything that grows;
But they can roll and trim the lawns, and sift the sand and loam,
For the Glory of the Garden occupieth all who come."

The last line is very suggestive.

Whether the work given us is very responsible or very humble our one thought is to be how, through doing it, we may add to the "Glory of the Garden."

There is to be no room in our minds for any thoughts of self, any pride or self glorification.

"For the Glory of the Garden occupieth all who come."]

Stage 3.—*A Vision of the Kingdom.*

[Discuss how, before they start work, both the Architect and the Gardener have clear pictures in their minds of what they want their building or their garden to look like when it is completed, and they try to show those who are working under them what they are aiming at.

In the same way God has shown us a little of what Heaven is like, so that we may know what He wishes earth to be like.]

When Our Blessed Lord was on earth, He taught His followers to pray, "Thy Kingdom come . . . on earth as it is in Heaven."

One of those to whom He taught that prayer was S. John, and perhaps S. John more than any other longed to know what the Kingdom in Heaven was like. At any rate there was granted to him a wonderful vision of its Glory, a description of which he was told to write down so that all might read it.

[Let the class discover the following points from the references given. In the Kingdom S. John saw:—

(1) *All owned the King of Kings* (Rev. vii. 9, xix. 16). Discuss how by doing all we can to help in the Missionary Work of the Church both at home and abroad, we may help to increase the number who on earth own the King of Kings.

(2) *All wanted to Worship Him* (Rev. iv. 8, v. 11–14). Discuss how worship is the natural expression of a personal love for Our Blessed Lord. Show how neglect of Public Worship means that love is growing cold. Discuss the remedy.

(3) *All wanted to Work for Him* (Rev. vii. 15). Discuss our readiness to serve those we love, and the crying need for workers who will give themselves enthusiastically to the task of furthering the Coming of the Kingdom.

(4) *There was perfect Peace* (Rev. vii. 9). Discuss how in uniting to worship and to serve the King of Kings, the nations of the earth are drawn closer to each other.

(5) *There was perfect Holiness* (Rev. vii. 13, 14). Discuss the present tendency to make light of sin, and suggest the need for active warfare against evil.

(6) *There was perfect Joy* (Rev. vii. 16, 17). Connect this with the previous point and show that it is only a better world which will be a happier world.]

Stage 4.—*Diversities of Gifts.*

[Let class find and discuss 1 Cor. xii. 4, xii. 16; Eph. iv. 11. Quote:

"The World is never so full
But there's room for an earnest man
It had need of me, or I should not be,
I'm here to strengthen the plan."]

HOME STUDY

Find instances in the Bible of men or women being called by God to do a particular piece of work for Him.

SUMMARY

"*Workers together with God.*"

God wants us to help Him to make His Kingdom on earth a little more like His Kingdom in Heaven. For each of us He has a special piece of work that no one else can do:

[Write below the lines quoted in Stage 4: "The World is never so full," etc.]

XL.—PERSONAL RELIGION

[Note to the Leader. In preparation for this lesson, study the Song of Solomon, as a Love Song in which are poured out the inmost feelings of the Soul who has found a Divine Lover.]

AIM

To help the class to think of Religion as a Personal Friendship with God.

INTRODUCTION

To-day we are bringing to a close our talks on the subjects chosen for study this year.

In our first talk we considered the opening words of the Apostles' Creed, and we will go back to them again for our last.

[Write on B.B. " I believe in God."]

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—*The Need for a Personal Religion.*

[Discuss. Many people say these words without realizing what they mean. It would be quite true for them to say that they believe that there is a God, it is scarcely true for them to say that they believe in God. We do not say we believe in anyone unless we know them very well, and to believe in God is to know Him as our Personal Friend.]

We may hear about God, we may read about God, we may go to His House, we may repeat words of prayer without having made the great discovery that He is no shadowy, far-away Being, but Someone intensely real, and intensely near. Until we make that discovery, until we find in God a Personal Friend Whose Love surpasses the deepest and truest human love, we do not know what religion is, and our souls will never be really satisfied.

More than fifteen hundred years ago there lived in the north of Africa a young man who had heard about God since he was a little child, but who did not discover for many years, that in Him, he had a Personal Friend.

As he grew up he tried to persuade himself that God did not exist.

He gave up prayer, he gave up going to Church, and while those who loved him mourned and prayed for him at home, he journeyed about from one place to another trying to find some occupation which he could settle to contentedly.

But it was all in vain, and in his search for happiness he grew more and more reckless.

He took to drinking with a very bad set of men who dragged him lower and lower, until he had sunk about as low as it is possible for any man to sink.

Then there came a change, and gradually there grew up within him the supreme conviction that the God Whom he had been taught about in his childhood was real, and for him the whole of life was altered, and the world became a different place.

He had found a Friend such as he had never had before, and he longed to be worthy of the Love of that Friend, and to become what that Friend wanted him to be.

Years afterwards S. Augustine, as we now call that young man, wrote,

"Thou hast made me for Thyself and my heart is restless till it rests in Thee."

So it is with us.

Until we have got hold of the real meaning of religion, until it is to us a Personal Friendship with God we shall never be really content.

Our soul needs God whether we realize it or not, and He alone can satisfy its yearning.

Stage 2.—My Beloved is Mine.

There are some very beautiful verses in the Song of Solomon which express in a wonderful way the ideal relationship between the soul and God.

[See if the class have any previous acquaintance with the Song.

Suggest that we can think of it as a Love Song in which are poured out all the inmost feelings of the soul who has found a Divine Lover.

We will take three verses from this Song, in each of which there are only four words.

[Write on B.B. "My Beloved is Mine" (Song of Solomon ii. 16).]

Here we have the triumph cry of the soul who has found a Divine Lover.

"My Beloved is Mine," His Presence will go with me as I go about my daily work, at any moment I can turn to Him for help and sympathy; in our Churches, and above all in the Blessed Sacrament, I can enter into the closest possible fellowship with Him.

[Discuss the wonder of being able to utter this triumph cry, and try and deepen sympathy for those who cannot utter it yet.]

Stage 3.—My Beloved is White.

[Write on B.B. "My Beloved is White" (Song of Solomon v. 10).]

Here we have the result of the soul's contemplation of its Beloved.

"My Beloved is White," and if I would be worthy of His Love, I must let Him wash me so that I too may be whiter than snow.

Stage 4.—"I am My Beloved's."

[Write on B.B. "I am my Beloved's" (Song of Solomon vi. 3).]

Here we have the Soul's desire to respond to the love of its Beloved.

"I am my Beloved's," and because my one desire is to serve Him, I will say:

"O use me, Lord, use even me,
Just as Thou wilt and when and where."

HOME STUDY

Find the Song of Solomon and copy out any verses which seem to you to express in a beautiful way the relationship between God and the human soul.

SUMMARY

Personal Religion.

We never really know the meaning of religion until we have found in God a Personal Friend.

In the Song of Solomon are poured out the inmost feelings of a soul who has found in Our Blessed Lord a Divine Lover.

"My Beloved is Mine."
"My Beloved is White."
"I am my Beloved's."

PART II

SIX TALKS ON THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

I—THE COMMUNICANT'S QUEST

AIM

To show that the life of the Communicant should be one of progress, and constant striving to be worthy to enjoy the full glory of the Beatific Vision.

INTRODUCTION

We have met here to-night as Communicants; we can put it in so few words, and yet it means something so deep and mysterious, so great and so glorious, that no words can adequately describe it. Let us try to-night to think what it really means to be a Communicant, and what the life of a Communicant should be like.

To help us we will take the beautiful legend of the Holy Grail and see what we can learn from it about the Blessed Sacrament.

PRESENTATION

Stage I.—*King Arthur and his Knights.*

We find the legend of the Holy Grail among the stories of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table; and before going any further it will be well to remind ourselves who King Arthur was and when he lived. In the time of our Lord you remember that Britain was part of the great Roman Empire and was ruled by the Romans wisely and well.

But about the year A.D. 400 there were so many wars in other parts of the Empire, that the Romans withdrew from Britain to try and restore order in the countries where rebellion was rife.

The effect of their withdrawal on Britain was disastrous. The kings of the little kingdoms into which our land was divided, quarrelled ceaselessly among themselves, and no sooner were they without the protection of the Roman armies than they were attacked by enemies from over the seas. It was during this troubled time that King Arthur lived, and Tennyson gives a vivid description of the country at the time of his accession. He says :

> " For many a petty King ere Arthur came,
> Ruled in this isle, and ever waging war
> Each upon each, wasted the land :
> And still from time to time the heathen host
> Swarmed overseas and harried what was left,
> And so there grew great tracts of wilderness
> Wherein the beast was ever more and more
> But man was less and less."

To help him restore order, rescue the oppressed, and establish a reign of peace and justice, Arthur gathered around him a band of knights, each of whom on admission to the Order took solemn vows pledging himself to be loyal to his king and help to carry out his wishes. Of each it could be said

> " He reverenced his conscience as his King,
> His glory was redressing human wrong,
> He spake no slander, nay, nor listened to it ."

Shortly after founding his Order Arthur was married, and after the ceremony the priest said to him :

> " Reign ye and live and love, and make the world
> Other, and may thy Queen be one with thee,
> And all this Order of thy Table Round
> Fulfil the boundless purpose of their King."

Then the Knights sang a song, in which they declared

> " The King shall follow Christ and we the King,
> In whom High God hath breathed a secret thing."

The Order was called the Order of the Round Table because each Knight was given a seat at a huge round table in the King's Banqueting Hall, and upon this seat his name was inscribed in letters of gold.

If during the year any of the Knights died or broke their vows, at Whitsuntide their places were filled by fresh Knights.

Around the names of King Arthur and his Knights have grown up many beautiful legends which, though they may not be historically true, have much to teach us. The legend of the Holy Grail is one of these.

Stage 2.—The coming of Sir Galahad.

At a certain Whitsuntide (so the story tells) the Knights had assembled for the banquet which always took place at that season. Every seat was filled save one, and in that no man dared sit, for tradition said that if any man took that place whose heart was not entirely free from sin, he would immediately die.

Suddenly the door opened and an old, old man ushered in a new Knight, Sir Galahad, whose shining silver armour looked a glittering white.

Straight up to the empty seat he led him, and stripping off the silken cloth that covered it, showed the wondering Knights the inscription in letters of gold.

"This is the seat of Sir Galahad the pure-hearted."

Quietly the new Knight took his place, and there he sat, just a boy, the youngest of them all, but his heart was as clean and white as his shining armour.

Stage 3.—The Legend of the Holy Grail.

Now there was one thing which all King Arthur's Knights were very anxious to see, and that was the Holy Grail, the cup out of which Our Lord had drunk on the night before His Death, when he instituted the Blessed Sacrament.

It was supposed to have been brought to Glastonbury by Joseph of Arimathæa, and then, owing to man's sinfulness, to have been withdrawn from sight, only to appear from time to time to those who were pure in heart, and each Knight longed to be found worthy to see it.

One of them, Sir Percival, had a sister, a nun and a very holy woman, and on seeing her one day he found her transfigured with joy, because, in answer to many earnest prayers, a vision of the Holy Grail had been granted her.

She told Sir Percival that she felt quite sure that before long what she had seen would be seen also by the Boy Knight, Sir Galahad.

Sending for him, she girded round his waist a belt woven from her own hair, upon which she had embroidered in silver and crimson a picture of the Holy Thing she had seen, and sent him away, saying to him :

> " Go forth, for thou shalt see what I have seen,
> And break through all till one will crown thee King
> Far in the Spiritual City."

Stage 4.—*The Quest of the Holy Grail.*

Time passed, and once more the Knights had assembled in the King's Hall for a banquet from which he himself was absent, having been sent for in the morning to help someone in trouble.

All were in their places, when suddenly came a sound as of a mighty peal of thunder, and a brilliant beam of light flashed through the Hall.

Veiled by a shining cloud there passed along it Something too wonderful for an ordinary man to see, and each Knight knew that he had been nearer than ever before to that which he longed to see, and felt bitterly disappointed that he had not been found worthy.

Sir Percival was especially grieved. Springing to his feet he made a vow that for a year and a day he would ride in search of the Holy Grail, and, following his example, the other Knights did the same. Scarcely had they finished than the King returned and asked Sir Percival to tell him what had taken place.

" But did you actually see the Grail ? " he interrupted when Sir Percival told how it appeared, and sadly the knight replied :

> " Nay, lord, I heard the sound, I saw the light,
> But since I did not see the Holy Thing,
> I sware a vow to follow it till I saw."

To each the King put the same question, and all made the same reply, until it was Galahad's turn. He said :

> " But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy Grail,
> I saw the Holy Grail and heard a cry,
> ' O Galahad ! ' and ' O Galahad ! follow me.' "

The next day the Knights set out to fulfil their vow, and it was arranged that when a year and a day had passed, they should meet again to tell the King their adventures.

Stage 5.—How Sir Percival and Sir Galahad fared on their quest.

At last the appointed day came.

The King sat on his throne, and one by one the Knights began to assemble.

But there were many vacant places, and among these was that of Sir Galahad, and the reason for his absence was made known when the King called upon Sir Percival to be the first to tell his story.

Sir Percival began by telling of the difficulties he had encountered, and of how several times he had been tempted to give up his search in despair.

He then went on to describe how, after he had travelled alone for many months, he had met Sir Galahad.

"I had come," he said, "to a tiny chapel in a valley beneath a high hill, and was talking to the priest, when he appeared, and together we received the Blessed Sacrament. Afterwards I confided in him how fondly I had hoped that here in this quiet spot my quest should end and I should find what I sought, and told him how sore was my disappointment when I saw nothing save the Holy Bread and Wine. He replied:

'Saw ye no more? I, Galahad, saw the Grail,
The Holy Grail descend upon the shrine.'

Then he told me," went on Sir Percival, "how never once had the vision left him, and that now God was calling him to another world to enjoy a still more glorious vision.

"Together we climbed the mountain and below us stretched a dark, mysterious valley and beyond the sea. Over the valley was a bridge resting on a thousand pillars. On to this Sir Galahad stepped, but when I would have followed flames of fire sprang up between us and I was left behind. On and on he went until he reached the sea, and there waiting for him was a boat which had the appearance of a Beautiful Being with wings, and this boat carried him swiftly away. And as I watched it seemed as though the Heavens opened and I caught a glimpse of the glory of the Spiritual City to which he was going; and still I gazed, and as Sir Galahad neared the gate of the city I saw a bright light over the boat, more brilliant than anything I had seen before, and in the midst of the light I saw what I had sought so long, and I knew that my quest was ended, for I too had seen the Holy Grail. I watched until I saw Sir Galahad pass through the

Gate of the City, and the Holy Grail passed in too. Then I turned and began my journey home."

So ended the story of Sir Percival.

Stage 6.—How Sir Gawain fared on his quest.

The other Knights had little to tell. Sir Gawain was called next, and told how he had soon decided that the quest was too hard and given it up.

Stage 7.—How Sir Bors fared on his quest.

Then came the turn of Sir Bors. He had had many adventures and much hardship, but in the end he too had been found worthy to see what he sought, and so wonderful had been the experience that he could only say:

> " 'Ask me not, for I may not speak of it,
> I saw it'; and the tears were in his eyes."

Stage 8.—How Sir Lancelot fared on his quest.

The saddest story of all was Sir Lancelot's. He told how a sin he knew of but could not give up, made him unworthy to see the Grail unveiled, though once he saw it covered.

Stage 9.—The Life of a Communicant.

Let us see now how this story is a picture of a communicant's life.

1. *The Communicant is in search of a hidden treasure.*

The Knights sought to see the Holy Grail itself, hidden beneath the veil which covered It.

The communicant seeks Our Lord Himself, hidden beneath the forms of Bread and Wine in the Blessed Sacrament.

2. *The Communicant must be prepared to face difficulties in his search for his Treasure.*

The Knights were often tempted to give up their search because it was so hard; the communicant often gets discouraged because of the difficulties he meets with, until, like the merchant seeking goodly pearls, he finds in the Blessed Sacrament the Pearl of Great Price, for which he will gladly surrender all the others.

3. *The Communicant's life must be one of progress.*

Sir Galahad did not give up his search the first time he saw the Holy Thing he sought. He went on searching for clearer and clearer visions, until at last he was found worthy to enter into the full glory of Heaven.

So the communicant's life should be one of progress. Each time we draw nearer to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament we should become a little more like Him, and so we are prepared for the day when the veil will be taken away and we shall see Him as He is.

> " O Christ, whom now beneath a veil we see,
> May what we thirst for soon our portion be,
> To gaze on Thee unveiled and see Thy face,
> The vision of Thy Glory and Thy Grace."
>
> —[559, A. & M.]

4. *The Communicant must remember that sin blinds the eye of the soul.*

> " Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."

Here we have the secret of the success and failure of the Knights. Sir Galahad could see what was hidden from Sir Lancelot, because no sin made him spiritually blind.

The communicant must never forget the need for preparation, and must ever seek the cleansing of the Holy Spirit.

II.—THE BLESSED SACRAMENT THROUGH THE AGES

KEYNOTE

The communicant is in search of a Hidden Treasure.

AIM

To show how the Blessed Sacrament has satisfied the spiritual needs of Christians through the ages.

INTRODUCTION

To-night we will try to work out more fully the first of the four thoughts suggested to us last time by the story of the Holy Grail—the communicant is in search of a Hidden Treasure.

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—*The Pearl of Great Price.*

It is very interesting to look back through the ages and to see how from the earliest times at the bottom of every human heart there has been the desire for God, vague in many cases but none the less real.

Many of you will know the lines written by an Indian poet more than a thousand years ago :[1]

> " Lord, in the darkness I wander,
> Where is the light ? Is there no light ?
> Nothing I know, and I wonder
> Is there no light ? Where is the light ?
> Lord, in the vastness I wander,
> Where is the way ? Is there no way ?
> How may I reach Thee, I wonder,
> Is there no way ? Lord, show me the way."

We know—do we not ?—how the oftener a needle comes into contact with a magnet the greater becomes the attraction of the magnet ; and so it is with the human soul—the oftener it touches God the greater becomes the desire for Him.

S. Augustine, speaking of this in his writings, says, " Thou hast made me for Thyself, and my heart is restless till it rests in Thee."

The Incarnation was God's answer to all the conscious and unconscious prayers of His people through the ages, that He would show Himself to them—and it is through the Blessed Sacrament that we to-day can make our own the fruits of the Incarnation.

When God walked this earth in Human Form all did not recognize Him ; but those who had learnt to use their spiritual eyes and their spiritual ears did so, and, seeking Him, they found in Him the satisfaction of their every need.

Then came the withdrawal of His Visible Presence, but not before the promise had been given that there should be a new way of coming into touch with Him, and that all who came to the Blessed Sacrament seeking Him, should find Him hidden beneath the simple outward forms of Bread and Wine, and enjoy the closest possible communion with Him.

In connexion with the needs of the body and the mind, what satisfies one generation seldom helps another.

[1] See " Victories of Love in Many Lands." C.M.S.

The wonder of the Blessed Sacrament is, that in It, Christians for nearly two thousand years have found all that their souls longed for and needed. The reason, of course, is that they have found God Himself: God, "the same yesterday, to-day and for ever"; God, the only Source, and only satisfaction, of all our spiritual desires.

So throughout the ages the Blessed Sacrament has been a Pearl of great Price—something so precious that it is worth while making endless sacrifices to obtain it.

Let us try to picture to ourselves different occasions upon which Christians have been helped by the Blessed Sacrament from the time of the Apostles down to our own time.

Stage 2.—The Blessed Sacrament in the Days of the Apostles.

Let us visit in imagination, first of all, a Holy Communion Service in the time of the Apostles. The Church is a room in the house of a Christian in Jerusalem; the Altar an ordinary table.

All the Christians who possibly can have gathered there, and among them are the Twelve Apostles.

It is only a few short weeks since Our Blessed Lord parted from them on the Mount of Olives.

His last command to carry on His work is still ringing in their ears.

They know their helplessness apart from Him. So in the early morning hours they have come to receive Him into their hearts in the Blessed Sacrament, and then go forth to face whatever the day's work brings, knowing that He is with them.

The result was very wonderful. We get the reference to the daily receiving of the Blessed Sacrament in Acts ii. 42; in Acts iv. 13 we read of the Apostles that men "took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." They were so full of the Divine Life that they were transfigured: They were so close to the Light of the World that they reflected His Brilliancy.

[B.B. The Apostles needed and received Power.]

Stage 3.—The Blessed Sacrament in the Days of Persecution.

Let us now pass on and visit in imagination another service which is being held secretly in the Catacombs near Rome in the year 259, when the great Roman persecution was at its height. We pass out of the gates of the City of Rome along a broad road known as the Appian Way. Presently we leave the road and after searching for some little time we find a narrow opening something like the entrance

to a cave. We go down it and find ourselves in one of the underground passages, of which there are so many outside the walls of Rome. We walk along, carrying tiny lamps, for it is very dark, and presently the passage opens on one side into a little room. Kneeling side by side on the rocky floor are young and old, rich and poor, who have come at the risk of their lives to receive Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. The Stone Altar is a Martyr's Tomb; at any moment they may hear the tramp of the Roman soldiers and be led away to prison and to death; and yet it does not seem to matter.

In the Blessed Sacrament they have learnt to find the Pearl of Great Price—Our Blessed Lord Himself—and if in order to reach Him they must pay with their lives, then they will gladly do so and count the cost but small, welcoming rather than dreading the Call to "Come up Higher," and enter that world where they will be a little nearer to Heaven, a little closer to their Beloved.

[B.B. The Persecuted needed and received Strength.]

Stage 4.—The Blessed Sacrament in the Middle Ages.

Let us pass on again, this time over a wider space of time. The days of persecution are over, it is the year 1415, and we are walking through the streets of London to Westminster Abbey. We pass through the great doors into the nave. There is assembled a great crowd of people, who are listening to a popular preacher, but we do not linger there, but passing on we enter one of the side chapels where the Holy Communion is being celebrated. The Altar is beautifully draped; there are flowers, candles, and everything to show the solemnity of the service, and among the kneeling worshippers is the King, Henry V.

When the service is over we turn to go, but as we do so we see a courtier approach the King.

"But, your Majesty," he says, "how was it that you were not among the larger congregation listening to the preacher in the nave?"

Very quietly comes the answer:

"Because I would rather go to meet my Friend than merely to hear Him talked about," and the King goes his way. He too has found in the Blessed Sacrament the satisfaction of his deepest spiritual needs. As the Apostles needed and found Power, as the persecuted needed and found Strength, so he needed and found the Sympathy of the Friend who will never fail us.

[B.B. King Henry V needed and found Sympathy.]

[This incident is taken from "The Catechism in Anecdote," by permission of Messrs. Skeffington.]

Stage 5.—The Blessed Sacrament in the Great War.

But we must pass on again. This time the year is 1917, and we are "Somewhere in France." The Altar is a big drum; it is covered with the Union Jack and placed within a half open tent. The Chaplain appears, and around the tent there gathers a little group of England's Sons. To-morrow they must go "Over the Top," they must come face to face with the Great Unknown, and they want to have with them "The Comrade in White." As they separate after the service there is a calm serenity plainly visible on their faces: "The Comrade in White" is with them, and with Him at their sides they will not fear if the call comes to cross the Great Divide.

Writing to his mother in the evening one lad says:

"After this morning I feel I can face anything, for the promise was made to me, 'Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.'"

[B.B. The soldiers needed and found Comradeship.]

Stage 6.—The Blessed Sacrament and our Daily Needs.

And what about ourselves? How well we know that we all have our special needs, and the longer we live and the more often we come to the Blessed Sacrament the more we shall realize that there we do gain power, strength, sympathy, comradeship, whatever it is for which our soul is yearning, and after each Communion we shall be able to say:

"Say, little lark, why do you fly,
To find your Maker in the sky?
He's near our native sod.
He would not dwell from man apart,
He's in the Heaven of my heart;
In me! In me! is—God."[1]

[1] See "The Church's Call to her Children." Dent.

III.—OUR FELLOWSHIP WITH THE HOLY ANGELS

(*Suitable for Michaelmas*)

KEYNOTE

The Communicant must be prepared to face difficulties.

AIM

To deepen in the class the sense of the wonder of our Fellowship with the Angels in the Blessed Sacrament.

INTRODUCTION

At our last meeting we were thinking of the first lesson we learnt from the story of the Holy Grail—the Communicant is in search of a Hidden Treasure.

We saw how as the Knights sought to see the Holy Grail hidden beneath the Cloud which covered It, so the Communicant seeks Our Blessed Lord Himself hidden beneath the forms of Bread and Wine in His Sacrament.

To-day we are to think of the second lesson which the story of the Holy Grail taught us—the Communicant must be prepared to face difficulties.

The question of the difficulties which a Communicant has to face can be dealt with in many different ways. Let us to-night think how we shall never find ourselves in any difficulty in which we cannot have the companionship, the sympathy, and the help of the Holy Angels, and of how, because in the Blessed Sacrament we are nearer to God than at any other time, we are nearer to them.

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—*Who are the Holy Angels?*

The Angels are, as it were, God's elder children, for He created them before He created men.

Just as God left men free to choose whether they would serve Him or not, so it would seem that He left the Angels free.

We read in the Book of the Revelation of the struggle that went on. "There was war in Heaven" (Rev. xii. 7). Led by S. Michael, the Angels who loved God fought against those who rebelled against Him, and turned them out of Heaven. Now, in Heaven there are

only the good Angels—pure sinless spirits, whose lives are spent in worshipping God and in doing His Will.

In the Bible we are told of nine different Orders of Angels, and it is thought that each Order has its own particular work to do.

Stage 2.—Where are the Holy Angels?

It is intensely wonderful to think of this marvellous Spirit World which we cannot see and yet which is all around us.

[Quote from "Faith and Character." (Dent.)

"If you were to rescue a fly out of a cup of milk, and were to let it crawl along your finger, could it see you and know what you had done for it? No. Could it see another fly or some other insect crawling towards it? Yes; a fly has eyes. Could it feel you getting it out of the cup? It would feel the influence of some great unseen outside power, but would not know or understand what it was.

This is an example of a world dwelling within another world which can be felt but not seen."]

Although those living in the Unseen World can see and understand what is going on in the Human World, we cannot see, and we can only very dimly understand, what is going on there.

In spite of this we know that as our spiritual life grows and develops we are able to understand more and more.

Stage 3.—The Holy Angels ministering to Our Blessed Lord.

It is very interesting to notice how all through Our Blessed Lord's earthly life Angels watched over and ministered to Him.

We read of their presence at the time of His Birth, of His Temptation, of His Agony in Gethsemane, of His Resurrection, and of His Ascension. In all the great crises of His life, Our Blessed Lord seems to have found comfort in the thought of their nearness and readiness to help Him (S. Luke xxii. 43).

[See Hymn 424, A. & M.:

"To earth with bitter sorrow weighed
Thou didst not scorn Thine Angel's aid."]

Stage 4.—The Holy Angels ministering to Men.

As the Angels watched over and cared for Our Blessed Lord, so they watch over and care for us, and each one of us has our own Guardian Angel under whose protection God has placed us (S. Matt. xviii. 10).

Our Guardian Angel is interested in all we do, is watching us anxiously when we are tempted, is grieved when we do wrong and rejoices over our penitence (S. Luke xv. 7); brings us God's help and carries our prayers to God (Gen. xxviii. 12–16); and when we die carries our spirit into that part of the Unseen World which we call Paradise (S. Luke xvi. 22).

Stage 5.—Isaiah joining in the Worship of the Angels.

In the Old Testament we have some very beautiful examples of how the realization of their fellowship with the Holy Angels, helped those who were sad and troubled. We will think of one of these to-day.

Isaiah lived about the year 700 B.C., at a time when the Kingdom of Judah was enjoying a period of great outward prosperity.

Isaiah was very troubled because their prosperity seemed to be leading the people to forget the God from whom it came.

He collected a little band of followers and inspired them with the desire to be true to God; but it was often very hard and disappointing work.

Isaiah was apt to get discouraged until it seemed to him that his work and his worship, like that of the people, was cold and dead.

Then something wonderful happened.

Feeling sadder and more unhappy than usual, Isaiah went one day to the Temple to pray.

Whenever he prayed, a Jew always faced what was to him the most sacred spot on earth—the Holy of Holies, where God was present in a very special way.

[Show model of Temple and describe. Read aloud Exodus xxv. 22.]

Beautiful curtains divided the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place, and massive doors of cedar wood, overlaid with gold, hid the Holy Place from the worshippers in the courts without.

So Isaiah knelt gazing towards the sanctuary where God's Presence was enshrined, until gradually he became more fully conscious of that Presence than ever before.

Stronger and stronger became the feeling of God's nearness, until it seemed to him that a door had been opened in Heaven and that with the eyes of his soul he could gaze within, and that with the ears of his soul he could hear what was being said.

The glory of that sight and of that sound was almost overwhelming. He says:

" I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the Temple. Above it stood the Seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of His Glory" (Is. vi. 1–4).

When the vision was over and Isaiah went back to his ordinary everyday work, we can imagine how the thought of what he had seen would comfort him when the difficult times came. For he had only seen what was going on all the time; God and the Holy Angels were always just as near as they had seemed then, and with the realization of their nearness he could no longer be lonely.

Stage 6.—The Church joining in the Angels' Worship.

The song which Isaiah heard the Angels singing brings our thoughts back to the Blessed Sacrament. We no longer have the Temple, with its mysterious Presence Chamber, for the Incarnation has made possible a still more wonderful meeting-place between God and Man.

Enthroned upon our Altars in the Blessed Sacrament is He for whom our souls are hungry and thirsty, and we have an inestimable privilege which was impossible for Isaiah.

We may not only worship from afar as he did, but we may receive into our very hearts our Beloved, and carry away with us His Sacred Presence.

In those solemn yet glorious moments when we worship before the Altar the veil which hides the Unseen World is very thin, and earth and Heaven seem as one, when with the Angel Hosts around the Throne we join in singing our songs of praise:

" Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of Heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious Name; evermore praising Thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, Heaven and Earth are full of Thy Glory: Glory be to Thee, O Lord most high."

As we go away from that scene of hallowed memories, we, like Isaiah, can take with us the comforting sense of the nearness not only of Him whom we have worshipped, but of those Bright Spirits who have worshipped with us.

" Still let them succour us, still let them fight,
Lord of Angelic Hosts, battling for right,
Till where their anthems they ceaselessly pour,
We with the Angels may bow and adore."—
(A. & M. 423.)

IV.—OUR FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

(*Suitable for All-Saintstide*)

KEYNOTE

The Communicant's life must be one of progress.

AIM

To deepen in the class a sense of the wonder of our Fellowship with the Faithful Departed in the Blessed Sacrament.

INTRODUCTION

At our last two meetings we have thought about the first two lessons which we learnt from the story of the Holy Grail: (1) The Communicant is in search of a Hidden Treasure; (2) the Communicant must be prepared to face difficulties.

To-night we pass on to think of the third lesson we learnt: (3) The Communicant's life must be one of Progress.

[That is a thought which is particularly appropriate at this season of the Church's year. On —— day we shall be keeping the Festival of All Saints and —— day will be All Souls' Day.]

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—*All Saints.*

(1) The whole aim of the follower of Christ is to become Christlike. On All Saints' Day we shall be thinking of those who, although they were ordinary men and women like ourselves, and faced by just the same temptations, kept so close to our Blessed Lord through their prayers and their Communions that men were able to see His Likeness reflected in them.

Now we call them Saints; their names form the Church's Roll of

Honour, and their example has inspired thousands to follow in their footsteps.

But as we think of the Saints we do want to remember that they only gradually became what they are now :

> " They climbed the steep ascent to Heaven
> Through peril, toil and pain."

It was because they were never satisfied with themselves, but were always trying to become better and better, that they attained to that holiness of life for which we honour them to-day.

(2) *All Souls.*—Then, on All Souls' Day we shall be thinking of all those other faithful followers of Christ who were called away from this world while they were still far from perfect, but in whom the Christlikeness had begun to grow, and is still growing, in the Land beyond the Grave. So this week our thoughts will be directed to that part of the Unseen World which we call Paradise ; and as at Michaelmas we tried to realize our nearness to the Angels in the Blessed Sacrament, so we shall try and realize our nearness to the Blessed Dead, especially our own loved ones now within the veil.

Stage 2.—Early Jewish Beliefs concerning the Faithful Departed.

One sometimes wonders if we are sufficiently thankful that we do not live in the days when death was looked upon as a cruel monster who snatched husband from wife, parent from child, friend from friend, and no one knew their fate.

As we read the Old Testament we see what a terribly sad thing death must have been before Our Blessed Lord came and, by explaining what happened to those who died, made death for the Christian seem more beautiful than sad. In early times we find the Jews thought that :

(1) *The dead went to live in a dark, gloomy pit beneath the earth.*

They spoke of this pit as " the place of darkness." See Ps. vi. 5 : " For in death no man remembereth Thee, and who shall give thanks in the Pit."

(2) *The dead were asleep or unconscious.*

See Ps. cxv. 17 : " The dead praise not Thee, O Lord, neither all they that go down into silence."

(3) *The dead were no longer cared for by God.*

See Ps. lxxxviii. 11, 12 : " Shall Thy loving kindness be showed in

the grave or Thy faithfulness in destruction? Shall Thy wondrous works be known in the dark and Thy righteousness in the land where all things are forgotten?"

Could anything be more sad than to think that death took those we loved to such a place as that?

Stage 3.—Later Jewish Beliefs concerning the Faithful Departed.

Later on we find that at any rate some of the Jews had been led by God a little nearer to the truth and had come to believe that:

(1) *The dead were still cared for by God.*

See Wisdom iii. 1, 2: "The souls of the righteous are in the Hand of God and there shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seem to die, and their departure is taken for misery, and their going to be utter destruction, but they are in peace."

(2) *The dead would one day rise again.*

See Job xix. 26: "Destroy this body . . . yet in my flesh will I see God."

Stage 4.—Christian Beliefs concerning the Faithful Departed.

But let us pass on now to think of what Our Blessed Lord taught us about the Faithful Departed.

(1) *The Faithful Departed go to a better world.*

Instead of thinking of death as something to be dreaded, Our Blessed Lord wanted us to think of it as promotion—a call to "come up higher," to live in a better world, a little nearer to Him, a little nearer to Heaven.

S. Paul, writing to the Philippians, tells them that though he is ready to work on earth as long as God wishes, yet he is "in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." (Phil. i. 23).

(2) *The Faithful Departed are at rest.*

And in this better world the faithful follower of Christ is to enjoy a time of rest. Rest, as we shall see presently, does not mean idleness, but the peace which comes with freedom from temptation. The struggle with the Powers of Evil will be over, and those who have fought manfully upon earth, in Paradise will "Rest from their labours" (Rev. xiv. 13).

(3) *The Faithful Departed are alive and active.*

It is quite clear too that the rest which the Faithful Departed enjoy is not, as some would have us think, a kind of sleep. The bodies of

the dead sleep in the grave, but their spirits are as fully conscious as when they were on earth. S. Peter tells us that when he was in Paradise Our Blessed Lord "preached to the spirits" (1 S. Pet. iii. 19).

(4) *The Faithful Departed are being prepared for Heaven.*

Our Blessed Lord also made it plain that the Faithful Departed do not go directly to Heaven. He said to the penitent thief, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise" (S. Luke xxiii. 43). Paradise is to be a time of final preparation for Heaven, for no one at death is ready to enter there. Writing of Heaven, S. John says, "There shall in no case enter into it anything that defileth" (Rev. xxi. 27).

In Paradise the Faithful Departed are purified from all that would make them unfit, and the Christlikeness goes on growing and growing until the day when they will "Wake up after His likeness, and be satisfied with it" (Ps. xvii. 15).

(5) *The Faithful Departed take an interest in us.*

There is a very beautiful passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews which shows us how keen an interest Christians in Paradise take in those who are still upon earth. [Show model of Colosseum.] The writer says that just as the spectators in the seats watched the contests in the arena, so with breathless interest the spirits of the Faithful Departed watch as those on earth fight their Christian battle. It is an inspiring thought, and one which should give us fresh courage to remember that we are "compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses" (Heb. xii. 1).

(6) *The Faithful Departed pray for us.*

And the Faithful Departed do not merely watch us—they pray for us. S. John tells us that when he was allowed to see Our Blessed Lord in glory in Heaven, constantly there rose up before His Throne, as the smoke of sweet-smelling incense from the golden censers in the temple, "the prayers of the Saints" (Rev. v. 8).

"They pray for us, they know all we are needing,
Their intercessions, wise and sweet and pure,
Draw our spirits upward, guiding, leading
To the Christ Whom they and we adore."

(7) *The Faithful Departed can be helped by our prayers.*

As the Faithful Departed pray for us so we may pray for them. The Jews always prayed for the Faithful Departed, and Our Blessed Lord must have joined in such prayers at the Temple services.

We do not know what they need in the world beyond the grave,

but we can just remember them before God's Throne and ask that all they do need may be given them. The following lines express what many of us have felt when one whom we loved was taken from us :

" How can I cease to pray for thee ? Somewhere
In God's wide universe thou art to-day.
Can He not reach thee with His tender care ?
Can He not hear me when for thee I pray ?
What matters it to Him, who holds within
The hollow of His Hand all worlds, all space,
That thou hast done with earthly care and sin ?
Somewhere within His ken thou hast a place."

Many people never pass a churchyard without a whispered prayer for the souls whose bodies lie buried there, e.g. " Grant unto them, O Lord, eternal rest, and let light perpetual shine upon them."

Stage 5.—Our Fellowship with the Faithful Departed in the Blessed Sacrament.

Probably there is no one of us who does not know what it is to long to feel near to someone who has passed beyond the grave, and we have heard a great deal lately about what is known as Spiritism—attempts to get into touch with the spirits of the dead through those who profess to have the power of calling them back to earth. There can be little doubt that there are persons who have the power to do this, but the use of such a power is condemned by the Bible and the Church, and for the Christian there is a far more beautiful and satisfying way of drawing near to those we love within the veil.

In the Blessed Sacrament we are nearer to Our Blessed Lord than at any other time ; and because the Faithful Departed are with Him we are also nearer to them.

" And they and we in our Communion sweet,
Together worship at the Saviour's Feet."

There before the Altar, as we kneel in adoration, the Holy Angels and the Blessed Dead unite with us, offering the lowliest homage to Him who is their King and ours.

" Till soothed and comforted our hearts find rest,
Sharing with them His Presence near and blest."

As we come away from our Communion we feel we can say with unwavering faith:

"Aye, love lives on, just out of sight and hearing
One Heart divine is holding us and them.
They have but reached the goal we too are nearing,
To be with Christ, the Christ of Bethlehem."

[Give true illustrations of experience of the nearness of the Faithful Departed to us in the Blessed Sacrament.]

V.—REVERENCE

KEYNOTE

"For every one that loveth will prepare the best and fairest place for his Beloved, for therein is known the affection of him that entertaineth his Beloved" ("Imitation," Book IV, Chap. xii).

AIM

To suggest how the carefulness of our preparation for the reception of the Blessed Sacrament will be the measure of our love to Him Who comes to us in that Sacrament.

INTRODUCTION

[Show copy of the "Imitation of Christ."]

We have here a copy of a book which was written a very long time ago by a very holy priest who was born near Cologne in the year A.D. 1380.

His name was Thomas à Kempis, and the name of his book is the "Imitation of Christ."

In it he has written down many of the wonderful thoughts which came to him as day by day he tried to imitate our Blessed Lord and become more like Him. The last eighteen chapters of his book are full of very beautiful thoughts about the Blessed Sacrament, and we are to-night to take one of those thoughts and see what we can learn from it which will help us as communicants.

PRESENTATION

Stage 1.—"*For every one that loveth will prepare the best and fairest place for his Beloved.*"

To S. Thomas à Kempis the Blessed Sacrament was a never-ending

source of wonder. That Our Blessed Lord, the King of Kings, worshipped and beloved by all the Hosts of Heaven, should condescend to come as a Guest into our hearts, seemed to him something so marvellous as to pass human understanding. He felt that nothing we could do, no trouble we could take in preparing to receive such a Guest, could be adequate.

His words are so simple, but they express so clearly what we all want to feel.

[Write on B.B., or show illuminated copy of the words: "For every one that loveth will prepare the best and fairest place for his Beloved, for herein is shown the affection of him that entertaineth his Beloved."]

The trouble we take in preparing to receive Our Blessed Lord will be the measure of our love to Him, and we will to-night think of the preparation of

(1) The Church,
(2) The Priest,
(3) Those who are to receive the Blessed Sacrament.

Stage 2.—The Preparation of: (1) *The Church.*

Let us begin with the preparation of the Church. Every time the Blessed Sacrament is celebrated, the Church becomes Our Blessed Lord's Palace and the Altar His Throne, and from the earliest times those who loved Him have tried to make them worthy.

(1) The part of the Church in which the Altar stands is usually railed off from the rest of the building, and known as the Sanctuary, or Holy Place. In early times it was felt to be so sacred that it was enclosed by screens, and, except during the most solemn part of the Communion Service, curtains hid it from the congregation. As the words of Consecration were spoken the curtains were drawn back, and with the utmost reverence the people gazed within, feeling as we do when we sing,

"Our Lord is on His Altar Throne,
He comes, He comes unto His own.
We worship, we adore Him."

( ) In the same way everything possible was done to make the Altar the most conspicuous thing in the Church. It was placed at the East end, so that all might face it; usually it was raised and approached by one or more steps; often behind it, to add to its

dignity, was a carved or painted reredos. The custom of bowing to the Altar as one passes it is a very old one. It helps one to remember that when once an Altar has been used by Our Heavenly King as His earthly Throne in the Blessed Sacrament it is made holy for all time by His presence.

(3) Naturally we like all the fittings of our Altars, and the vessels used when the Blessed Sacrament is celebrated, to be the very best that we can obtain. For the hangings, the fair linen cloth, the burse and veil, and the purificators we like to have the richest silk and the finest linen, embroidered as beautifully as possible. For the chalice, the paten, the cruets we like to have precious metals such as silver or gold, and the best glass.

(4) To add to the beauty of our Altars we place upon them a cross, candlesticks, and flowers, which, besides making our Altars beautiful, have special messages for us.

The cross tells us that He Who comes to us in the Blessed Sacrament is He Who died for us upon the Cross.

The flowers remind us that He is no longer dead, but "alive for evermore" (Rev. i. 18).

The lighted candles remind us that He came to bring light to those who were in the darkness of sin, ignorance, or despair.

The care of the Altar linen, the arranging of the flowers, the cleaning of the brass or of the sacred vessels, is work we want to think of as being a tremendous honour; and each time we do anything of the kind we want to do it as an act of love to Our Blessed Lord.

Stage 3.—*The Preparation of* : (2) *The Priest.*

One imagines that the most wonderful moment in the life of a priest must be that when for the first time he stands before the Altar to celebrate the Blessed Sacrament. Over and over again S. Thomas à Kempis tells us how great a privilege he feels this is. Here is one of the passages in which he refers to it :

"How great and honourable is the office of God's priests to whom it is given with sacred words to consecrate this Sacrament of the Lord of Glory; with their lips to bless, with their hands to hold, with their own mouth to receive, and also to administer the same to others."

To emphasize the dignity of the office of a priest a special dress is in many churches worn by the priest celebrating the Blessed

Sacrament. In early days the dress worn by the priest was that in ordinary use at the time. When this kind of dress was no longer worn on ordinary occasions it was still worn, made of the most beautiful materials possible, by priests at the Holy Communion for two reasons :

(1) It was the kind of dress Our Blessed Lord would have worn when He instituted the Blessed Sacrament.

(2) It seemed appropriate that a special dress should mark the special solemnity of the Holy Communion service.

So when he is celebrating Holy Communion to-day everything worn by the priest represents something worn by Our Blessed Lord in the Upper Room the night before His Death :

(*a*) *The Alb* is a long sleeved white linen garment reaching to the wrist and ankle, which represents the long linen tunic worn by Our Blessed Lord.

(*b*) *The Chasuble* is made of silk or linen, and is like a cloak with an opening for the head. It represents Our Blessed Lord's seamless robe.

(*c*) *The Amice* is a square of linen which falls back over the neck, and represents the head-dress Our Blessed Lord would have worn, and which when not in use would have fallen back in this way.

(*d*) *The Maniple* is a narrow scarf of silk or linen worn by the priest over his left arm. This represents Our Blessed Lord's handkerchief.

(*e*) *The Stole* is a longer scarf of silk worn by the priest over his shoulders, and represents the towel with which Our Blessed Lord girded Himself when He washed the Disciples' feet.

Stage 4.—*The Preparation of :* (3) *The People.*

Lastly, we come to the preparation of those who are to receive the Blessed Sacrament.

Just as when Our Blessed Lord was on earth He would stay in the houses of His friends, so now He asks you and me to receive Him as our Guest into our hearts.

When we realize what it means, the thought of His Holiness and our own unworthiness is almost overwhelming and we cry instinctively :

" I am not worthy, cold and bare
The lodging of my soul.
How canst Thou deign to enter there ?
Lord, speak and make me whole " (323 A. & M).

Then we remember that in the greatness of His Love He wants to come, that He will be bitterly disappointed if when He knocks at the door of our hearts we refuse to open them to Him, and we say :

" I am not worthy, yet, my God,
How can I say Thee nay ? "

The honour is one we cannot refuse ; all that remains for us to do is to try and make fit preparation for the reception of our Guest, and the preparation is something which must be going on all through our lives.

Just before we are to make our Communion we shall of course make a special and final preparation, but we shall not have done what we could unless each day of our lives we remember that we must

(1) *Guard our Thoughts.*—Our Blessed Lord comes to make our hearts His home. If they are to be worthy we must allow no wrong thoughts to stay there. When He comes to us we want to be free from all that it would make Him sad to see, and we want to be able to show Him things that will make Him glad.

That means that each day all the wrong things we have done must be searched for, confessed, and forgiven, so that our hearts may be clean.

It means, too, that each day there should appear in our hearts fresh flowers of " love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," so that they may be beautiful.

Then, too, we must

(2) *Guard our Words.*—Our lips are the doors through which our Blessed Lord will enter when He comes to be our Guest. If they are to be clean, then words which are untrue, unloving, or, worse still, which are an insult to Him, must never be allowed to defile them. If they are to be beautiful they must be made so by words which are true and loving, and words which do honour to Our Blessed Lord.

Lastly, we must

(3) *Guard our Actions.*—Clean and beautiful hearts, clean and beautiful lips, and then clean and beautiful hands. The hands which are to be stretched out in welcome to Our Blessed Lord, the hands which are to touch Him, must be cleansed from the stains made upon them by wrong actions and must be beautified by acts of loving service.

We have no time to-night to think of the special preparation which

should immediately precede our Communion ; but, in conclusion, let us think of one or two very ancient customs which have grown out of the longing to show honour to Our Blessed Lord in His Sacrament.

Stage 5.—"*For herein is known the affection of him that entertaineth his Beloved.*"

(1) *Fasting Communion.*—The first of these ancient customs is that of receiving the Blessed Sacrament fasting, and, if we can possibly do so, in the early morning.

For this there are several reasons :

(*a*) If we have completed our preparation the night before and then first thing in the morning come to receive the Blessed Sacrament, our minds are more likely to be free from distracting thoughts which would make us unable to give Our Blessed Lord the whole-hearted worship which is His due.

(*b*) Then, too, to take the very first opportunity of coming to meet Our Blessed Lord in His Sacrament is surely a way of showing Him we want Him. Just as when we are going to meet a friend, if we are fond of him we arrange to meet as early as possible, so our love for Our Blessed Lord makes us want our meeting with Him to take place as early as can be.

In fact many of us feel that to come to a late celebration when we could have come to an early one is being rude to Him, though we have no right whatever to judge other people if they do not think as we do.

(2) *Acts of Reverence.*—Lastly, there are a number of little acts of reverence—such as kneeling in the aisle if we have to wait to go up to the Altar instead of standing, bending on one knee before and after we receive the Blessed Sacrament—which are not essential, but which some of us feel help us to honour Our Blessed Lord, and we do them out of love for Him.

" For herein is shown the affection of him that entertaineth his Beloved."

VI.—THE DRAMA OF THE EUCHARIST

REFERENCES

The general idea of this lesson, but not the details, was obtained from a lecture given by Dr. T. W. Crafer at Whitelands Training College in July, 1922.

KEYNOTE

" This do in remembrance of Me " (S. Luke xxii. 9).

AIM

To help the class to see how the Communion Service brings before us the different aspects of Our Blessed Lord's life and work.

INTRODUCTION

Let us to-night concentrate our thoughts on those wonderfully appealing, infinitely pathetic words spoken by Our Blessed Lord when He instituted the Blessed Sacrament on the night before His death : " This do in remembrance of Me " (S. Luke xxii. 19).

Lest we forget, lest we allow other things to fill our minds and blot out the memory of all that He did for us, we are bidden by Him to meet constantly for a memorial service—a service which will bring before us things of which we ought always to have a " thankful remembrance."

PRESENTATION

The Drama of the Eucharist.

It is very wonderful when one comes to study the Holy Communion service to notice how it brings before us all the different aspects of Our Blessed Lord's life and work. It is like a play in which there are a number of scenes, each bringing before us some particular little bit of His work, until it is as though what happened nearly two thousand years ago in Palestine was being acted over again before our eyes. Let us to-night, with the service before us, try and work out this thought in detail.

Scene 1.—*The Great Lawgiver.*

The Lord's Prayer, with which most people think the service commences, is really part of the priest's private preparation. It is usually said in an undertone, and the people do not join in the " Amen." With the Collect for Purity, (the Commandments), and the Kyrie the curtain rises upon the first scene.

It is early Spring, and the white marble and gold of the Temple Courts glitter in the sunshine. Beneath one of the colonnades sits a Rabbi listening to the eager question of one whose duty it is to teach and expound the law.

"Master," says the questioner, "which is the great commandment in the law?"

And the Greatest of all lawgivers replies that in the Law of Love is summed up every lesser law.

In the distance we hear a sound of music and the voices of an invisible choir chant softly:

"A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you" (S. John xiii. 34).

As we think of all that is the negation of love in our own lives we find ourselves saying with a new earnestness, "Lord, have mercy upon us," and then the curtain falls.

With the Collects it rises upon the second scene.

Scene 2.—The Man of Prayer.

A lonely spot in the open country appears before us, and stretched upon the ground is the Rabbi whom we have already seen.

Wrapt in communion with the Unseen, He is oblivious of all else save the joy of intercourse with the Father He loves.

In the distance others are watching, wondering what makes prayer so real and living to Him when it seems so cold and dead to them.

At last He ceases and they gather round Him and say, "Lord, teach us to pray" (S. Luke xi. 1). Eagerly they listen as He tells them about the Father Who likes them to bring their every need to Him and Who is ever at hand to help and sympathize.

"Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you" (S. James iv. 8), chants the invisible choir, and the curtain falls again.

With the Epistle and Gospel it rises upon the third scene.

Scene 3.—The Great Teacher.

It is the Sabbath Day, and we see the Synagogue at Capernaum crowded with people. Sitting at the raised desk in the middle of the building is He Who has been the Central Figure of every scene.

Spellbound the people listen to His words, and much of what He says is stored up in the minds of His hearers, so that years afterwards it may be written down.

"Never man spake like this Man" (S. John vii. 46), chants the invisible choir as the curtain falls.

With the words of the Nicene Creed it rises on the fourth scene.

Scene 4.—The Light of the World.

At first all is dim and dark, and we can only just distinguish figures groping blindly hither and thither, seeking something which it seems they cannot find. Then in the distance appears a faint light. Nearer and nearer it comes until the whole scene is radiant with its power, and more sweetly than ever before the singing of the invisible choir steals upon our ears:

"The people which sat in darkness saw a great light" (S. Matt. iv. 16), they chant; and as our eyes grow more used to the brilliance we see that the light seems to be coming from a rough manger filled with straw wherein lies a little Child. Then the singing begins again:

"He shall be a Light to lighten the Gentiles" (S. Luke ii. 32), we hear, and as we watch an old, old man takes the little Child in his arms with loving care. The old man disappears and we see the little Child grown to Manhood, and we see that it is He upon Whom we have gazed so often already.

"I am the Light of the World" (S. John viii. 12), He says, and beams of light go out in every direction, showing the way to Him Who is the Goal of Seekers, the "Sun of Righteousness" (Mal. iv. 2).

"That was the True Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (S. John i. 9), chants the choir, and as the curtain falls we think of those precious truths stored up in our Creeds which the True Light has revealed to us.

With the Offertory sentences comes the fifth scene.

Scene 5.—The Friend of the Poor.

Once more the Central Figure is the same, but this time we see Him as the Friend of the poor and needy. Around Him are gathered the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind. Pointing to them He says to us:

"Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" (S. Matt. vii. 12).

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me" (S. Matt. xxv. 40).

And the voices of the invisible choir chant with supreme conviction:

"It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts xx. 35).

Then the curtain falls; but with the prayer for the Church Militant it rises on the sixth scene.

Scene 6.—The Head of the Church.

A little group which we have seen before appears before us.

We see Him with Whose face we have become so familiar and His little band of followers.

He is telling them about a wonderful society He is forming which is to be known as His Church, and of which He is to be the Head and they the first members, and He is explaining how close the relationship between them will be.

"I am the Vine, ye are the Branches," He says to them. "He that abideth in Me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit" (S. John xv. 5).

"For He is the Head of the Body, the Church" (Col. i. 18), chants the invisible choir, and the curtain falls.

With the Invitation, Confession, Absolution, and Comfortable Words it rises again on the seventh scene.

Scene 7.—The Good Shepherd.

A rough and stony mountain path, the feeble bleating of a poor lost sheep, and a Shepherd weary and worn, with bleeding Hands and Feet, searching until He finds it—that is what we see, and we know His Face. With tear-dimmed eyes we watch the Shepherd lift it in His Arms and carry it home as the invisible choir chants:

"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (1 Tim. i. 15.)

The curtain falls once more, to rise with the "Sursum Corda" and "Sanctus" upon the eighth scene.

Scene 8.—The Incarnate Son of God.

The veil which hides the Unseen World is lifted; Earth, Paradise, and Heaven are as one, for all are united in one great act of worship before the throne of the Incarnate Son of God, Who once walked the earth in human form.

Almost overwhelmed by the Glory of the Vision we join in the universal song of praise, and we, too, say:

"Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, Heaven and Earth are full of Thy Glory: Glory be to Thee, O Lord most high."

Then the curtain falls and rises with the ninth scene, grander and

more solemn than all the preceding ones, brought before us by the Prayer of Humble Access, and the Prayer of Consecration.

Scene 9.—*The Bread of Life.*

We see an Upper Room in a house in Jerusalem and the most solemn and wonderful meal ever partaken of is in progress. Sitting at the head of the table is He Whom we have come to know and love.

He takes in His Hand one of the flat cakes of unleavened bread, blesses It, and divides It among the others.

"Take eat," He says. "This is My Body which is broken for you."

He takes a cup of wine, blesses It, and hands to each in turn.

"Drink ye all of This," He adds, "for This is My Blood which is shed for you."

In the background mysterious figures are moving, and we see faces belonging to people of many different lands. By their dress we can tell that they belong to many different periods in the world's history.

As we gaze we notice that in the eyes of all is a hungry, yearning look, denoting not physical but spiritual hunger. He who sits at the head of the table looks lovingly towards them.

"Come unto Me" (S. Matt. xi. 28), He says, "I am the Bread of Life. . . ."

"He that cometh to me shall never hunger" (S. John vi. 35).

Softly the invisible choir sings:

> "Bread of Heaven, on Thee we feed,
> And Thy Flesh is Meat indeed.
> Ever may our souls be fed
> With this true and living Bread" (318, A. & M.).

Then the curtain falls and with the "Agnus Dei," Words of Administration and prayer, following, the curtain rises on the tenth scene.

Scene 10.—*The Lamb of God.*

The Great Drama is drawing to its close.

All is dark and shadowy, and we can only just discern a hill upon which three crosses are raised and upon which three figures are hanging.

Presently the darkness clears and we can gaze on the sad, sweet Face of Him Who hangs in the centre. As we gaze we recognize It:

It is the Face of Him Whom we have seen as the Great Lawgiver, the Man of Prayer, the Great Teacher, the Light of the World, the Friend of the Poor, Head of the Church, the Good Shepherd, the Incarnate Son of God, and the Bread of Life; and the invisible choir chants:

"Behold the Lamb of God Which taketh away the sin of the World" (S. John i. 29)

As we look into those Eyes fast closing in the sleep of death we see the question:

"This have I done for thee: what doest thou for Me?"

And the choir sings as the curtain falls:

"Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all" (108, A. & M.).

With the "Gloria" and the "Peace" it rises on the eleventh scene.

Scene 11.—*The Prince of Peace.*

It is evening time, and within that Upper Room where we saw them recently, the followers of the Crucified are sitting within locked doors, sorely troubled and perplexed, when quite suddenly He appears among them.

In His Feet and Hands and Side are wound marks, and He says to them:

"Peace be unto you" (S. John xx. 26).

"I am He that liveth and was dead" (Rev. i. 8).

"And His Name shall be called the Prince of Peace" (Is. ix. 6), chants the choir, and the curtain falls, to rise with the Blessing upon the twelfth and last scene.

Scene 12.—*The King of Kings.*

Upon the green slopes of the Mount of Olives are those whom we have just been watching in the Upper Room. He who has been the Central Figure of every scene is standing with His Hand upraised in blessing. His Visible Presence is about to be withdrawn, but His words are:

"Lo, I am with you always" (S. Matt. xxviii. 20).

And the invisible choir chants:

"For He is Lord of Lords and King of Kings . . . and He shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. xi. 15; xix. 16).

APPENDIX

(*a*) Prayers for Use with the Lessons in Part I

A short prayer summing up the main ideas of the lesson may helpfully find a place in the closing worship.

These can be collected from a variety of sources, and when necessary can be drawn up by the Leader.

A very helpful and illuminating book for the Leader to possess is "A Book of Prayers for Use in an Indian College." This can be obtained from the Challenge Book and Picture Store, 24, Great Russell Street, W.C. The price is one shilling and sixpence. Most of the prayers are too long for use with the average Bible Class, but they are set out in such a way that very beautiful short prayers can be made by dividing them into sections and occasionally omitting difficult phrases.

The following prayers are suitable for use with particular lessons. The Leader would find them very helpful for private use during the week preceding the giving of the lesson, and might then adapt and simplify them for use with the class, writing them out as required in a notebook kept for the purpose:

For Lessons	I to III,	see Prayer	on Page	16.
Do.	IV,	do.	do.	82.
Do.	V to VII,	do.	do.	59.
Do.	VIII,	do.	do.	105.
Do.	IX,	do.	do.	33.
Do.	X,	do.	do.	101.
Do.	XI,	do.	do.	65.
Do.	XII,	do.	do.	80.
Do.	XIV,	do.	do.	111.
Do.	XV,	do.	do.	76 and 13.
Do.	XVI,	do.	do.	98.

For Lessons XVII to XXII, see Prayer on Page 61.

Do.	XVII,	do.	do.	110.
Do.	XVIII,	do.	do.	57.
Do.	XIX,	do.	do.	121.
Do.	XXI,	do.	do.	13.
Do.	XXIV	do.	do.	113.
Do.	XXIX,	do.	do.	21.
Do.	XXXII,	do.	do.	24 and 56.
Do.	XXXIV,	do.	do.	34.
Do.	XL,	do.	do.	86.

Another helpful book is "A Chain of Prayer Across the Ages," by S. Fox, published by Murray at two shillings and sixpence.

(*b*) Prayers for Use with the Talks in Part II

The following opening and closing prayers were used at the Communicants' Class, in conjunction with the Talks in Part II. The Talks are in no way dependent upon their use :

OPENING PRAYERS

(1) "*In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*" Amen. ✠

(2) *Let us ask Our Blessed Lord to help us as we prepare to make our Communion on Sunday.*

O Blessed Lord Jesus, we thank Thee for Thy promise to come to us in Holy Communion veiled beneath the forms of Bread and Wine, and with Thine Own Life to strengthen and refresh our souls. Help us as we try to prepare our hearts to receive Thee, our Heavenly Guest, and grant that by a constant and reverent use of this Blessed Sacrament we may prepare for the day when the veil will be taken away and we shall see Thee Face to Face. Amen.

3. *Let us pray for all who have not yet learnt to love the Blessed Sacrament.*

To the souls who pass Thee by in Thy Sacrament and to whom it is as nothing,

Grant Thy Mercy, Pitiful Jesu.

To the souls who visit Thine Altar, yet know Thee not in the reality of Thy Manifestation,

Grant Thy Truth, Loving Jesu.

(4) *Let us pray for the Faithful Departed, remembering that, as in the Blessed Sacrament we draw near to Our Lord, so we draw near to them.*

" Grant unto them, O Lord, Eternal rest, and let light perpetual shine upon them." ✠

(5) *Let us give thanks for the Blessed Sacrament and all that it means, saying together :*

" Jesus, in Thy dear Sacrament
Thy Cross I cannot see,
But the Crucified is offered there,
And He was slain for me.

" Jesus, in Thy dear Sacrament
Thy Flesh I cannot see,
But that Flesh is given to be our Food,
And It was scourged for me.

" Jesus, in Thy dear Sacrament
Thy Blood I cannot see,
But the Chalice glows with those Red Drops
On Calvary shed for me.

" Jesus, in Thy dear Sacrament
Thy Face I cannot see,
But the Angels there behold the Brow
Thorn-crowned for Love of me.

" Jesus, in Thy dear Sacrament
Thy Heart I cannot see,
But that fiery Heart is prisoned there
And It was pierced for me.

"Jesus, My Maker and My God,
Thy Godhead none can see,
But Thou art present God and Man
In Thy Sacrament with me."[1]

(6) "*Let the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be always acceptable in Thy Sight, O Lord, our Strength and our Redeemer.*"

CLOSING PRAYERS

(1) *Let us remember Our Blessed Lord's Invitation,* "*Come unto Me.*" *Let us resolve that it shall never be said of us,* "*His own received Him not,*" *and let us say:*

"O come to our hearts, Lord Jesus,
There is room in our hearts for Thee."

(2) *If we would worthily receive Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, four things are necessary.*

The first thing required is that our hearts shall be clean and fit to be His Dwelling Place. "*For every one that loveth will prepare the best and fairest place for his Beloved.*" *Let us make an* Act of Penitence *and say:*

"Lord, we are not worthy that Thou shouldst come under our roofs, but speak the Word only and Thy Servants shall be healed."

(3) *The second thing required is that we shall believe Our Blessed Lord's promise to come to us in this Sacrament. Let us make an* Act of Faith, *and say:*

"Lord, we believe, help Thou our unbelief."

(4) *The third thing required is that we shall be full of thankfulness for all that Our Blessed Lord has done for us, especially for His Precious Death, of which each Communion is a Memorial. Let us make an* Act of Thanksgiving, *and say:*

"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

[1] Words by the late H. R. Oxenham. See "The Catholic Supplementary Hymn Book," or the "New Office Hymn Book."

(5) *The fourth thing required is that our hearts shall be filled with an ever-deepening love for the souls for whom our Saviour died. Let us make an* Act of Love, *and say:*

"May we all Thy loved ones be,
All one Holy Family,
Loving for the love of Thee—
Hear us, Holy Jesus."

(6) *Let us pray that at the end of the world we may be found worthy to enjoy for evermore the Vision of Our Blessed Lord in His Glory, and say:*

"O Christ, Whom now beneath a Veil we see,
May what we thirst for soon our portion be,
To gaze on Thee unveiled and see Thy Face,
The Vision of Thy Glory and Thy Grace."

(7) *The Grace.* ✠

(*c*) Note on Lessons V, XVII, and XXI

Of recent years there has been a very widespread awakening to the need for giving our children, as part of their equipment for the Battle of Life, careful instruction in matters relating to sex.

The responsibility for giving such teaching naturally rests, in the first place, with the parents, for their relationship to the child is such that they should be peculiarly fitted for the task. In fact, it cannot be too strongly urged that to give this teaching themselves is a privilege of which no one has any right to deprive them except for a special reason.

Yet the subject is one that does in a very real way concern teachers:

(1) Such teaching cannot really be separated from ordinary education, and there are countless ways in which the teacher can give indirect help to the parents. We shall return to this point later.

(2) Owing to circumstances, there are very many children who are unable to receive the necessary information from their parents. In these cases the teacher may be called upon to act *in loco parentis*.

(3) The teacher whose work lies among adolescents has a wonderful opportunity for helping them to form pure and noble ideals of man-

hood and womanhood, and for establishing a healthy relationship between the boys and girls.

I. *The Dangers of the Policy of Silence.*

Looking back over their own childhood, a very large number of the parents and teachers of to-day cannot recall having themselves received as part of their education any instruction with regard to the subject which we are considering. It will be well, therefore, before we go any further, to consider the reasons for this policy of silence which at one time was practically universal and which still has its advocates : They are deserving of careful attention :

(1) There is the silence which is due to intense reverence. With fatherhood and motherhood are bound up some of the deepest and tenderest emotions of which the human soul is capable. Such feelings are not easy to speak of, and to discuss them lightly would be profanity.

(2) There is the silence which is the result of the fear that if these things are explained to the children, they will make awkward remarks, or ask embarrassing questions.

(3) There is the silence which comes from confusing ignorance with innocence, and from the dread lest knowledge should stimulate curiosity and cause temptations which might not otherwise have presented themselves.

(4) There is the silence which comes from a distaste for the whole subject, and from the inability to speak of it without a feeling akin to shame, because it has not been realized that no plan ordained by God can in itself be anything but pure and holy.

There is much in these arguments that is reasonable, and yet the policy of silence is daily becoming more dangerous.

We are living in an age when these matters are discussed openly in ordinary conversation, in books, newspapers, theatres, and picture palaces, not always from the highest point of view.

Our children must be educated ; they must, as they grow older, mix with people of varying standards of morality, and sooner or later they are bound to come into contact with that from which we fain would shield them.

If they have been carefully brought up they will shrink from what is coarse and revolting, and it will make no appeal ; but if they have hod no definite teaching on moral questions they may well be deceived by the subtler arguments of those who, with the utmost skill, so work

upon the emotions that what is base appears noble, and what is sinful seems beautiful.

Those who have worked among young people know how tragic may be the result of ignorance.

Pure knowledge given in a beautiful and impressive, but perfectly natural, way is one of the greatest safeguards with which we can provide our boys and girls, and is a means of preventing many a disastrous love-affair and unhappy marriage.

It is hard to understand how those who have their interests at heart, can still allow our young people to marry without any real understanding of the sacredness and the responsibilities of the marriage relationship.

Even if the silence of those to whom they would naturally have looked for help has no obvious bad results, it often causes untold suffering and perplexity to our growing boys and girls.

Many intensely pathetic instances of this have come under the writer's notice in which questions and difficulties, about which they dare consult no one, have produced morbidness and want of balance in those who should have been perfectly healthy and normal.

Furthermore, if our boys and girls do not learn the facts of life until they reach adolescence, or if they are told these things crudely, they often experience a feeling of shock and intense repulsion. Anyone with even an elementary knowledge of psychology will realize the danger of this.

II. *Work among Children.*

Let us think, then, of how the teacher who is working among children who have not yet reached adolescence may assist the parents in this connexion.

(1) It is of paramount importance that there should be co-operation between teachers and parents. If the teacher can be a friend who is welcomed to the home and whom the parents take into their confidence, each will be able to help the other. Once a friendly relationship is established it will be far easier for the teacher to mention to the parents anything in the child's behaviour which may have given cause for anxiety, or to refer to them any questions asked by the children which it seems more fitting that they should have the opportunity of answering. Very great tact is needed here; but not infrequently parents who feel that they do not know how best to give

the children the information they wish them to have, will consult the teacher about it.

(2) Another way in which the teacher's influence may be used indirectly in the right direction is by the reverent treatment of all such subjects as life, birth, love, and marriage, when they occur in the lesson or are mentioned in conversation, and by checking any tendency to flippancy or coarseness. Much will be accomplished if we can help the children to feel that when we are speaking of such matters we are indeed on holy ground.

(3) The training of boys and girls in courtesy and mutual respect is also of great importance. We want to teach each to recognize and reverence the spark of the divine within the other, and to be ready to perform all those little outward acts of courtesy which are the outcome of a sympathetic consideration.

(4) Yet another very vital question, and one which concerns the teacher equally with the parents, is that of the development of self-control. To arouse in the children a desire to be in complete control of every power of mind and body and to help them to attain to this ideal is something for which we must ever be striving.

The body controlled by the mind, the mind controlled by the spirit, the spirit controlled by God—that is what we want.

> "Seek not to break the triple bond assigned,
> Mind sees by Spirit, Body moves by Mind.
> Divorced from Spirit, both way-wildered fall,
> Leader and led, the blindfold and the blind."

(5) Much can also be done by the provision of healthy means of recreation and of books which are clean and wholesome in tone, for lending to the children.

III. *Work among Adolescents.*

When we pass on to consider work among adolescents we are faced by a subject so vast that we can do no more than mention some of the spheres in which the teacher's influence may have weight:

(1) The worker who would be a real friend to the boy or the girl during these critical years needs to have sufficient experience of life to be able to take a sane well-balanced view of the moral difficulties they may have to face, and to be ready at all times to give practical help and advice when called upon. To have a trustworthy friend

whom they may safely confide in, may make just all the difference to young people who cannot get the help they need at home.

(2) At Bible Classes, Study Circles, and Training Classes it is usually possible to introduce lessons on chivalry for boys, and women's influence for girls. With both, such subjects as reverence for the body, the wonder of life, and the sanctity of marriage can be dealt with quite naturally.

Perhaps, however, a word of warning may not be out of place here. The age of which we are thinking is an emotional one. We want to give all the help necessary, but we do not want to be constantly leading the thoughts of our boys and girls in this direction.

(3) Supremely important at this time is the arranging of wholesome forms of recreation.

Books and magazines of the best kind and all such games and outdoor exercise as will promote physical fitness, are invaluable.

Only by taking trouble over such things can we hope to counteract the attraction of what is undesirable.

(4) Much can also be done by providing opportunities for the boys and girls to meet and get to know each other under the best possible conditions. Mixed Clubs, which are badly run or are not under proper supervision, may do more harm than good; but where the right tone and atmosphere can be maintained the mixing of the sexes may be very beneficial.

An experiment in this direction has been going on for some time in connexion with a particular Social Club attached to the Boys' Bible Class, for whom these lessons were written. Once a month during the winter an open evening is held to which visitors may come on the payment of a small fee for admission. These are attended by many of the Young Helpers in the Kindergarten and some of the older teachers. In this way it has been possible to get in the best type of girls to meet the boys, and the result has been very encouraging.

(5) The worker who is in touch with both boys and girls can often quietly and unobtrusively influence the friendships they form.

When no other way presents itself it is still possible to "Watch and pray," and "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."

VI. *Conclusion.*

We are all familiar with the story of Sir Galahad, the Boy Knight, of whom Tennyson writes:

"His strength was as the strength of ten,
Because his heart was pure."

But there is another character in the story who is less familiar, yet just as beautiful.

It was a woman who first inspired Sir Galahad with his high ideals and, after girding on his armour, pledged him to his quest.

Is not this old, old story full of inspiration for both men and women workers of to-day?

Each of our boys is a potential Sir Galahad; each of our girls, by right of her womanhood, has an influence over men which can be used as the pure-hearted maiden of the story used hers.

With us lies the responsibility of teaching each of them how to use rightly the power that is theirs.

(*d*) Note on "Discussion" Lessons

It was suggested by one who read these lessons in manuscript that teachers would appreciate more detailed help in the rather difficult matter of stimulating discussion.

(1) *The Value of discussion.*—The value of discussion in the Senior Departments of our Sunday Schools and in our Bible Classes is not yet by any means universally recognized.

There are some who urge that it is the Leader's duty to impart knowledge, and that to invite expressions of opinion from the class is unwise, since their limited experience will prevent their views from being anything but superficial. To such one would suggest that though it is possible to store the mind with facts by means of oral teaching, where those facts are connected with religion, they will be of little value, and do little to help forward spiritual development, until they have been so thought out and assimilated by the members of the class that they have become very parts of themselves.

Thoughtful boys and girls will often think out at home some sermon or address to which they have listened, but to rely on this is to run very grave risks.

In this process of thinking things out for themselves young people need the guidance of others of wider experience, for if left to themselves they may come to conclusions which are incomplete or erroneous.

The sermon or address is also unsatisfactory if used exclusively,

because it seldom does more than stir the emotions of the apathetic or mentally lazy.

In studying Our Blessed Lord's teaching methods, His insistence on His hearers thinking things out is striking. The meaning of the Parable had to be sought for, and there had to be mental effort, in order to answer the question He so frequently put to them: "What think ye?"

Where discussion is allowed in connexion with religious lessons the Leader has unique opportunities of guiding the formation of the opinions of the class on most important matters. The necessary background of knowledge can be supplied in order that their views may be well-balanced, and help can be given in sifting the wheat from the chaff, the true from the false.

(2) Others who object to this method of teaching do so because they have a vague, undefined fear that if the class is allowed to say exactly what it thinks, and not what it thinks it ought to think, there will be startling and embarrassing revelations.

It is quite true that this will frequently be the case, but surely if crude and false ideas are in the minds of the class it is far better that the Leader should know it. It is useless to live in a fool's paradise, it is unwise to try to kill these ideas by repression; and treating them as a sign of utter depravity and assuming an attitude of shocked superiority is often unfair.

By taking it for granted that every member of the class is a seeker after truth, and by treating every expression of opinion seriously, the Leader can often draw out the poison from these misconceptions and lead the class to a more mature judgment.

This attitude in itself checks any tendency to intentional flippancy.

(3) *Stimulating discussion.*—But very often those who are quite conscious of the value of discussion find difficulty in obtaining it. Either the class has nothing to say, or it is too shy to say it.

Here the Leader's attitude is of supreme importance. If he or she can become in the eyes of the class a patient, sympathetic inquirer with them, just as eager to learn as to teach, probably all will be well, and there will be no difficulty in getting them to discuss when discussion would be of value.

"What do you think . . . ?" "I should so like to know . . . ?" "I often wonder . . . ? "Have you ever felt . . . ?"—these are the type of question to stimulate discussion.

If none arises, usually it means that the point in question does not

present any particular difficulty to the class and that there is no need to linger.

While avoiding all appearance of nervousness or hurry, the Leader should not allow the discussion to drag on when interest flags.

It is essential that the class should know the problem for discussion at least a week in advance if they are to be prepared to take an intelligent part.

Debates, with short papers by members, are a variation of the same method.

It is, of course, unwise to start a discussion on any subject if the Leader's knowledge of it is meagre or only partly digested. In such cases it is better either to defer the question or get outside help.

(3) *The Leader's part.*—Throughout a discussion lesson the Leader's position is similar to that of a chairman. The Leader suggests the points to be considered, sees that there is no confusion by adhering to some definite plan as to who speaks first when all have something to say, prevents the discussion from becoming irrelevant, supplies additional information, and gathers up conclusions.

(4) *Dangers to avoid.*—It is of supreme importance to realize that though difficulties concerned with the inner life of the soul may sometimes be talked over privately with the Leader, discussion on such matters in class is seldom healthy or advisable, and that consequently many lessons do not lend themselves to the discussion method.

Narrative lessons, devotional addresses and meditation have their part to play, and though occasionally the Leader or a member may with intense reverence and reticence give the class the benefit of some deep spiritual experience, this will be exceptional.

In conclusion, it may be well to reiterate that the success of a discussion lesson depends on its being a simple, natural, and spontaneous interchange of opinion between a little group of Fellow-Travellers who, as they walk along the Road of Life, are all seeking the same Goal.

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